

20N
1
23
3 1761 11970018 5

Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



Assemblée
législative
de l'Ontario

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

No. 85A

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

N° 85A

2nd Session
41st Parliament

Thursday
18 May 2017

2^e session
41^e législature

Jeudi
18 mai 2017

Speaker: Honourable Dave Levac
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Dave Levac
Greffier : Todd Decker

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7400.

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7400.

Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



ISSN 1180-2987

Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Thursday 18 May 2017 / Jeudi 18 mai 2017

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Rental Fairness Act, 2017, Bill 124, Mr. Ballard / Loi de 2017 sur l'équité en location immobilière, projet de loi 124, M. Ballard

Hon. Yasir Naqvi	4523
Mme Nathalie Des Rosiers.....	4523
Mr. Ernie Hardeman	4525
Mr. Percy Hatfield.....	4528
Third reading vote deferred.....	4532

Notice of reasoned amendment

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	4532
------------------------------------	------

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Bob Delaney.....	4532
Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	4532
Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn.....	4532
Mr. Randy Pettapiece.....	4532
Mme France Gélinas	4532
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	4532
Mrs. Cristina Martins	4532
Mr. Yvan Baker.....	4532
Hon. Liz Sandals	4532
Mme Gila Martow.....	4532
Hon. Chris Ballard	4532
Hon. Mitzie Hunter	4532
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	4532

Government advertising

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	4532
------------------------------------	------

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Probation and parole services

Mr. Patrick Brown.....	4534
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	4534
Hon. Marie-France Lalonde.....	4534

Government advertising

Mr. Patrick Brown.....	4535
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	4535

Hydro rates

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	4536
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	4536
Hon. Glenn Thibeault.....	4536

Hydro rates

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	4537
-------------------------	------

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	4537
Hon. Glenn Thibeault.....	4537

Sexual violence and harassment

Ms. Laurie Scott	4538
Hon. Yasir Naqvi	4538

Opioid abuse

Mme France Gélinas	4538
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	4539

Land use planning

Mrs. Cristina Martins	4539
Hon. Bill Mauro	4539

Electric vehicles

Mr. Michael Harris.....	4540
Hon. Steven Del Duca.....	4540
Hon. Glen R. Murray.....	4540

Nurses

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	4540
Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn	4541

Agri-food industry

Mr. Mike Colle.....	4541
Hon. Jeff Leal.....	4541

Public consultation

Mr. Monte McNaughton	4542
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	4542
Mr. Robert Bailey.....	4542
Hon. Mitzie Hunter	4542

Birth certificates

Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	4542
Hon. Tracy MacCharles	4542

Nuclear safety

Ms. Ann Hoggarth.....	4543
L'hon. Marie-France Lalonde	4543

Executive compensation

Ms. Sylvia Jones.....	4543
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	4543
Hon. Liz Sandals	4544

DEFERRED VOTES / VOTES DIFFÉRÉS

Fair Hydro Act, 2017, Bill 132, Mr. Thibeault / Loi de 2017 pour des frais d'électricité équitables, projet de loi 132, M. Thibeault

Second reading agreed to	4544
--------------------------------	------

Anti-Human Trafficking Act, 2017, Bill 96,

Ms. Naidoo-Harris / Loi de 2017 contre la traite de personnes, projet de loi 96, Mme Naidoo-Harris

Third reading agreed to	4545
-------------------------------	------

Rental Fairness Act, 2017, Bill 124, Mr. Ballard / Loi de 2017 sur l'équité en location immobilière, projet de loi 124, M. Ballard	
Third reading agreed to	4545

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson	4545
----------------------------	------

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

Age-Friendly Whitby	
Mr. Lorne Coe	4545
Speaker's whisky of the year	
Mr. Percy Hatfield	4546
Graduation rates	
Ms. Harinder Malhi	4546
Long-term care	
Mr. Sam Oosterhoff	4546
Savio Wong	
Ms. Catherine Fife	4546
Bladder cancer	
Mr. John Fraser	4547
Elmira Sugar Kings	
Mr. Michael Harris	4547
Sean and Michael Sullivan	
Ms. Daiene Vernile	4547
E. Mayhew and Son	
Mr. Monte McNaughton	4547
Correction of record	
Hon. Mitzie Hunter	4548
Speaker's comments	
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)	4548
Estimates	
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)	4548
Visitor	
Mr. Sam Oosterhoff	4548

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES / RAPPORTS DES COMITÉS

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly	
Mr. Monte McNaughton	4548
Report adopted	4548

MOTIONS

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly	
Hon. Laura Albanese	4549
Motion agreed to	4549

House sittings	
Hon. Laura Albanese	4549
Motion agreed to	4549
Visitors	
Mr. Granville Anderson	4549

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Hospital services	
Mrs. Gila Martow	4549
Hospital funding	
Ms. Cindy Forster	4549
Water fluoridation	
Mrs. Cristina Martins	4550
Health care	
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson	4550
Hospital funding	
Ms. Catherine Fife	4550
GO Transit	
Mr. Han Dong	4551
Medical assistance in dying	
Mr. Monte McNaughton	4551
Hospital funding	
Ms. Cheri DiNovo	4551
Hydro rates	
Mme Nathalie Des Rosiers	4551
Rail service	
Mr. Victor Fedeli	4552
Privatization of public assets	
Ms. Cindy Forster	4552
Hydro rates	
Mr. Han Dong	4552

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS / AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS

Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act (Freedom of Conscience in Health Care), 2017, Bill 129, Mr. Yurek / Loi de 2017 modifiant la Loi sur les professions de la santé réglementées (liberté de conscience en matière de soins de santé), projet de loi 129, M. Yurek	
Mr. Jeff Yurek	4553
Mr. Gilles Bisson	4554
Mr. John Fraser	4555
Mr. Steve Clark	4556
Ms. Cheri DiNovo	4557
Hon. Eric Hoskins	4558
Mr. Victor Fedeli	4558
Mr. Michael Harris	4559
Mr. Jeff Yurek	4559

Young professionals

Mr. Granville Anderson	4560
Mr. Lorne Coe	4561
Ms. Peggy Sattler	4561
Mr. Yvan Baker	4562
Mr. Bill Walker	4563
Ms. Catherine Fife	4564
Mr. Steve Clark	4565
Mr. Sam Oosterhoff	4565
Mr. Granville Anderson	4566

**Protecting Vulnerable Persons in Supportive Living
Accommodation Act, 2017, Bill 135, Ms. Forster /
Loi de 2017 sur la protection des personnes
vulnérables dans les logements supervisés, projet
de loi 135, Mme Forster**

Ms. Cindy Forster	4566
Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn	4568
Mr. Bill Walker	4569
Miss Monique Taylor	4570
Ms. Sylvia Jones	4571
Ms. Catherine Fife	4571
Ms. Peggy Sattler	4572
Ms. Cindy Forster	4572

Young professionals

Motion agreed to	4573
------------------------	------

**Protecting Vulnerable Persons in Supportive Living
Accommodation Act, 2017, Bill 135, Ms. Forster /
Loi de 2017 sur la protection des personnes
vulnérables dans les logements supervisés, projet
de loi 135, Mme Forster**

Second reading agreed to	4573
--------------------------------	------

**Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act
(Freedom of Conscience in Health Care), 2017, Bill
129, Mr. Yurek / Loi de 2017 modifiant la Loi sur
les professions de la santé réglementées (liberté de
conscience en matière de soins de santé), projet de
loi 129, M. Yurek**

Second reading negated	4573
------------------------------	------

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR**Time allocation**

Hon. Helena Jaczek	4574
Mr. Ernie Hardeman	4574
Mr. Gilles Bisson	4577
Mr. Lorne Coe	4581
Mr. John Vanthof	4584
Vote deferred	4586

**Safer School Zones Act, 2017, Bill 65, Mr. Del Duca /
Loi de 2017 sur la sécurité accrue des zones d'école,
projet de loi 65, M. Del Duca**

Mr. Victor Fedeli	4586
Third reading debate deemed adjourned	4587

1. The first part of the document is a letter from the President of the United States to the Congress, dated September 17, 1787. It is a very important document, as it is the first official communication from the President to the Congress. The letter is written in a very formal and dignified style, and it is a very good example of the President's power and authority. The letter is also a very good example of the President's duty to the people, as he is explaining the reasons for his actions and the benefits to the country.

2. The second part of the document is a letter from the President to the Congress, dated September 17, 1787. It is a very important document, as it is the first official communication from the President to the Congress. The letter is written in a very formal and dignified style, and it is a very good example of the President's power and authority. The letter is also a very good example of the President's duty to the people, as he is explaining the reasons for his actions and the benefits to the country.

3. The third part of the document is a letter from the President to the Congress, dated September 17, 1787. It is a very important document, as it is the first official communication from the President to the Congress. The letter is written in a very formal and dignified style, and it is a very good example of the President's power and authority. The letter is also a very good example of the President's duty to the people, as he is explaining the reasons for his actions and the benefits to the country.

4. The fourth part of the document is a letter from the President to the Congress, dated September 17, 1787. It is a very important document, as it is the first official communication from the President to the Congress. The letter is written in a very formal and dignified style, and it is a very good example of the President's power and authority. The letter is also a very good example of the President's duty to the people, as he is explaining the reasons for his actions and the benefits to the country.

5. The fifth part of the document is a letter from the President to the Congress, dated September 17, 1787. It is a very important document, as it is the first official communication from the President to the Congress. The letter is written in a very formal and dignified style, and it is a very good example of the President's power and authority. The letter is also a very good example of the President's duty to the people, as he is explaining the reasons for his actions and the benefits to the country.

6. The sixth part of the document is a letter from the President to the Congress, dated September 17, 1787. It is a very important document, as it is the first official communication from the President to the Congress. The letter is written in a very formal and dignified style, and it is a very good example of the President's power and authority. The letter is also a very good example of the President's duty to the people, as he is explaining the reasons for his actions and the benefits to the country.

7. The seventh part of the document is a letter from the President to the Congress, dated September 17, 1787. It is a very important document, as it is the first official communication from the President to the Congress. The letter is written in a very formal and dignified style, and it is a very good example of the President's power and authority. The letter is also a very good example of the President's duty to the people, as he is explaining the reasons for his actions and the benefits to the country.

8. The eighth part of the document is a letter from the President to the Congress, dated September 17, 1787. It is a very important document, as it is the first official communication from the President to the Congress. The letter is written in a very formal and dignified style, and it is a very good example of the President's power and authority. The letter is also a very good example of the President's duty to the people, as he is explaining the reasons for his actions and the benefits to the country.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 18 May 2017

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 18 mai 2017

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

RENTAL FAIRNESS ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 SUR L'ÉQUITÉ EN LOCATION IMMOBILIÈRE

Mr. Naqvi, on behalf of Mr. Ballard, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 124, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 / Projet de loi 124, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I'm going to take a very brief moment to make some comments, but I'll be sharing my time with the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Housing, who will be presenting most of the remarks on third reading of this very important bill.

I just wanted to speak on behalf of my community of Ottawa Centre. As many of you know, Ottawa Centre has a downtown community with some significant development that is taking place. Especially, we continue to see new condo buildings that are being built in my riding, a development that is welcomed by the community.

This bill will be a significant relief to many people who live in my community who rent, mostly for the young people who attend both Carleton University and the University of Ottawa, but also many young families as well that rent. By eliminating the 1991 cut-off, through this particular bill, we of course would ensure affordability of housing to many of those young people and those young families, so I am quite grateful and supportive of this bill in that regard; from the perspective of my constituents, it's something that I've heard a lot about.

The second group of people I am quite pleased will benefit from this bill are those who live in retirement residences: our seniors. I've heard from many seniors, especially seniors who live in the Colonel By residence in Old Ottawa South, that seniors' residences, many of them built after 1991, are not covered by rent control and they see significant increases. This bill will cover those seniors' residences, and those seniors who live on limited means by way of their pension will see relief in that regard, so I'm quite appreciative of that. I hope other members see that as well and will support this bill.

Before I pass the floor to the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Housing, I just want to say: Go, Sens, go. It was a great victory last night, 5-1. We are, I believe, six games away from holding the Stanley Cup. Hope is eternal.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Go, Sens, go.

Il me fait plaisir de participer au débat pour la troisième lecture sur le projet de loi 124, l'équité dans des locations immobilières.

I am very happy to participate in this debate on Bill 124, which is, in my view, urgently needed and reflects significant, great work that was done by the Ministry of Housing and its minister.

I want to start by thanking all the participants in the public hearings and the members of the committee for their input, which was very much appreciated.

Mr. Speaker, the government's work to improve access to suitable and affordable housing for the people of Ontario predates the Rental Fairness Act. Since 2003, the government has invested about \$4 billion in affordable housing throughout the province. It has helped create about 20,000 rental units, helped repair over 275,000 social and affordable housing units, and helped over 90,000 households with rent and down payment assistance.

The core vision of the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy is that every Ontarian has access to an affordable and suitable home. That means that they have some form of security of tenure so they can have the foundation to secure employment, to raise a family where they choose and to build strong communities that have stability. Our goal is also to end homelessness by 2025. It's an ambitious goal, but as Ontarians, we need to be committed to it.

Last December, as you know, the Promoting Affordable Housing Act was given royal assent. It gives municipalities the option to implement inclusionary zoning, and it also makes it less expensive to build secondary suites in new homes. Those are measures designed to increase the supply of affordable housing for our communities.

Certainly, recently, the Fair Housing Plan has demonstrated that we remain serious and committed to creating affordable housing options and reducing the pressure of high housing costs.

Let me talk a little bit about the Fair Housing Plan, because it's integral to the work that we're doing today. On April 20, the government released the Fair Housing

Plan, a set of 16 comprehensive actions designed to make buying or renting a home more affordable. The Fair Housing Plan includes the following:

- a 15% non-resident speculation tax in the greater Golden Horseshoe;

- reducing landlords' costs by aligning property tax rates for purpose-built rentals with those of condos and houses;

- leveraging provincially owned land to build more affordable housing units;

- a \$125-million development charge rebate program to encourage developers to build new rental apartment buildings;

- creating a team to continue to work with developers and municipalities to eliminate red tape, to really remove all the barriers and ensure that shovels get in the ground as quickly as possible; and

- of course, part of this plan was also to expand rent control to all private units in Ontario, eliminating the exemptions for the apartment buildings built after 1991.

There are nearly 1.2 million households in the province's rental market. Rental vacancy rates are low and demand is high. This is because people want to move to Ontario. They want to share in the economy. We're proud of this. We want to make sure that they have places to stay so they can stay in Ontario and continue to promote and participate in our economy. So it is important, I think, that we deal with the housing issue to ensure that everyone can indeed have an affordable house.

We know that there's no silver bullet to ensuring housing affordability. Nevertheless, there are important measures that this bill represents to ensure that we protect the ability of renters to stay housed and stay in the building that they choose. As was mentioned, it's important that we have this measure because it affects all generations, young people as well as senior citizens, who do need to have some predictability in their rental, so that they continue to pay the price of their rent and stay housed where they want to be.

0910

With the Fair Housing Plan, we want to create the right conditions for people so they can afford to put down roots and stay where they want to live.

Let me talk a little bit first about rent control. In our proposed Rental Fairness Act, we are tackling unfair rent hikes that have been occurring recently, and we want to increase protections for tenants while maintaining and protecting landlords' rights as well.

Bill 124 is an important piece of legislation that, if passed, will amend the Residential Tenancies Act. It represents the culmination of years of work and of consultations with different groups: with municipalities, with tenants' groups, with landlords' associations. It is designed not only to increase affordability but to remove some of the irritants that existed in the system.

The government is committed to continuing to protect tenants, ensuring that they have security of tenure—that is, that they can stay and they're not kicked out, evicted, for no good reason. We want to continue to ensure that they are able to pay their rent.

In 2012, we capped the annual rent increase guideline at 2.5%. However, buildings built on or after November 1, 1991, continue to be exempt from rent increase guidelines. This is what, today, we want to remove: this anomaly where we had some buildings that were subject to rent control and others that were not. We want the entire rental housing system to be subject to the same rules, so that we don't have a two-tiered system. Renters all across Ontario will know the rules, and so will landlords. This means extending rent control to all private rental units and getting rid of the outdated, two-tiered rent control system.

It's simply unacceptable that so many Ontarians are faced with housing costs that have risen so dramatically. It's time that we deal with this problem, and that's what this Residential Tenancies Act review aims to do.

Throughout the consultations, landlords were consulted and tenants were consulted, as well as economists, municipal service managers, indigenous partners, advocacy groups and transitional housing providers. We have received over 450 online submissions from engaged citizens throughout the province. We have received different petitions from Generation Squeeze, with 3,000 signatures, that asked us to expand rent control to deal with the rent spikes that have occurred recently.

This helps shape legislation that is balanced and that offers predictability, affordability and opportunity to Ontario's rental market.

We have also had lots of discussion among members of the committee, and we had great presentations at the committee. Indeed, during the public hearings, the elected chair of East York ACORN, Alejandra Ruiz Vargas, stated, "By ending the post-1991 exclusion, thousands of families and individuals can have secure housing. They can live without fear that their rents are going to double."

The executive director of the Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations stated that "since the government's announcement, I've had a lot of ... people crying on the phone because their landlord is not going to be able to hit them with 10% increases every year. They were fearful for the future, but now they're not."

We also heard from the legal profession, including staff lawyer Joseph Richards, who is a graduate of the University of Ottawa and made a great presentation, where he said that the bill brings stability and also supports new landlords to be accurate in setting their starting rental charges.

That's the other part of this bill. It allows a landlord to set the initial rent at the level that he or she feels is appropriate for the market, then provides security of tenure to the renter, to the person who actually rents. If that person chooses to leave that apartment, the landlord or landlady is able to then put back the rental unit at the market rate or the rate that they so choose. It's a balanced legislation because it protects the person, the renter, in his or her ability to stay where they want to be.

We have to recognize how important it is to provide some security of tenure, some predictability for our renters, because one of the biggest stresses in life, besides

losing a loved one or a divorce, is moving. Moving costs a lot. It can displace a family and displace school opportunities for children. It makes it harder for seniors to adapt to new neighbourhoods. It also makes it difficult, often, for people that have chosen to live somewhere because it was close to their school, close to their university or their college, or close to work. Having to move is costly. We want to ensure that we protect renters and allow them to stay where they have so wished, and not be evicted for no good reason and not be evicted for the doubling of rental charges.

Let me review a little bit the scope of the act with you so that we are sure about what this bill does. Through the proposed Rental Fairness Act, we are answering the call to make Ontario's rental housing system fairer, more affordable and more predictable for tenants.

Let me emphasize how it protects people from unfair rent spikes before coming into force. While the majority of the proposed amendments will come into force upon royal assent, we've added transitional measures for rent control. Should the Rental Fairness Act pass, all notices of rent increase given on or after April 20—the day that the government introduced the Fair Housing Plan—will be capped at 1.5%. That's important. That means that from April 20, all notices of rent increase are captured by this bill, and that protects tenants. I also want to ensure that we continue to talk about the range of protections for tenants that is included in the bill. Certainly, I think, outside of rent control, there's a comprehensive suite of reforms that had been called for for years.

We're tackling issues like a disparity in leases across the province that meant that some leases had illegal clauses in them. Throughout the consultation, we heard from small landlords and from tenant groups that they wanted Ontario to join the majority of provinces—the majority of provinces have a standard lease. This bill provides and gives the authority to the ministry to do consultations and then come up with a standard lease.

A standard lease is a good thing. It exists elsewhere because it does provide for stability and knowledge. It will be written in clear language, plain language so that people know what they're getting into. For both the tenant and the landlord, it's nice if they know what's going on. It's nice if they know what they are committing to do. The objective is to ensure that people know what contract they are entering into, know what their responsibilities are on both sides, and ensure that there's no unfair advantage taken on by landlords who impose clauses, sometimes, that are illegal. This was a request not only from tenants' groups but as well from small landlords, who want to actually benefit from good guidelines so they know what they're getting into and what their obligations are.

Madam Speaker, certainly there will be an obligation to consult people before coming up with a standard lease. We know, and it was clear during the committee hearings, that many organizations are happy to participate with the government to help set a good standard lease: a standard lease that will actually deliver on a promise of

clarity and plain language and will make sure that everybody understands what they're getting into.

The second piece that was actually quite interesting and came up often during the consultation was the abuse of landlord's-own-use evictions. The bill takes steps to lessen the abuse of the landlord's-own-use eviction provisions. We know that in Ontario there are thousands of good landlords, good landladies, that get along with tenants. We also know that there are thousands—millions—of tenants who pay their rent on time and who comply with their obligations. However, we know that there's a possibility of abuse, and we have known that there were some real cases of abuse throughout Ontario.

0920

Currently in the Residential Tenancies Act, it is possible for a landlord to evict a tenant to provide for his or her personal use or that of a member of the family. This was always in the Residential Tenancies Act and was designed to allow the landlord or landlady to take his or her property back—breach the lease—in order to install members of the family. Unfortunately, this has been abused throughout Ontario. We know that many landlords, to get rid of tenants, pretend that they actually want to take the property back, and then put it back on the market at a higher price. Indeed, there was so much abuse that this was a constant demand of tenants' groups. I think we've heard that through the hearings and we had heard that in consultations before.

So the bill does provide a presumption of bad faith that occurs in some instances. We have agreed with our friends from the other side, the NDP, and have included two of their proposed amendments to ensure that there are no loopholes. It is a presumption of bad faith. If indeed the landlord has good reasons to respond and has good reasons to evict the tenant and things change—he or she wanted to be in the unit, take it for their own use, but something happened and it's no longer the case—certainly there's the possibility of justifying that they were not acting in bad faith. But it is important that there is this rebuttable presumption to avoid the abuses that we saw throughout the system.

I see that my time is running out, so I just want to point out a couple of other things that are in the bill.

We have heard from transitional housing providers. The bill does provide protections for people who are in transitional homes but recognizes that they don't get better in a year. Many of the participants said, "We need some period of time to be in transitional housing so that we can access all the good treatment." The bill therefore responds to that concern and extends the current exemptions of one year to four years to ensure that people who are in transitional housing have the benefit of the treatments that are offered for four years, provided that—and we are quite clear in the bill—they need to have some protection as well and be treated very fairly.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 124. In this Legislature, we've talked over

and over about the housing affordability crisis that we are facing in Ontario. Whether it's shelters, social housing, rental units or single-family homes, we're facing a shortage of supply. As a result, there are 171,000 families on the wait-list for social housing, bidding wars for apartments, and increases in housing prices. Bill 124 is a band-aid solution that in the long term may make the supply shortage worse.

Over the last few years, we've talked about the need to better balance the Residential Tenancies Act to protect both good tenants and good landlords. One presenter pointed out in committee that this is not a fight between tenants and landlords; it's a fight between good people and bad people.

There are many stories of good landlords and good tenants: the landlords who knew their young tenants were struggling to pay for their wedding, so they gave them free rent for a month; the small landlord and tenant who have a key to each other's apartment to take care of each other's cats when they're away; the landlord who was frustrated this year that costs were going up so much that he was forced to raise rents for the first time in over 10 years.

Last year, the government agreed that part of the solution to our supply problem was to encourage people to become small landlords. Instead, this bill does exactly the opposite. One of the concerns of those potential landlords is that if they rent out the unit and their personal circumstances change, they won't be able to take back that space.

Imagine the seniors who have created a second apartment in their house, intending to move a caregiver in when they need assistance. In the meantime, they are considering renting the unit. Under this bill, they won't.

Imagine a young couple who are working for their first house and want to rent out part of the house as an apartment until they need it for their family. Under this bill, they won't. First, this bill adds a one-month penalty for people who have been renting out part of their house and now need that space for their family or caregiver. This means that the person who moves in their elderly mother to care for her now not only has to give the former tenant proper notice, they also have to pay them a one-month penalty in cash. The young family that is expecting a child and needs the space in their home will have to pay a penalty of one month in rent in cash.

Let me give you an example of one of the people who will be impacted. The committee received an email from a woman who became a landlord when she rented her condo to move back to her childhood home to give her aging parents care. Both her parents have serious, debilitating health conditions that make it risky for them to live at home alone. She rented her condo rather than selling it because she was concerned about her ability to re-enter the real estate market in Toronto.

At some point, her parents will need more support than she can offer and will likely need to enter supportive housing or long-term care. This small landlord, who has made a selfless decision to help her parents, is upset that

the government is penalizing her for her decision. We tried to vote out this section, but the government refused.

We recognize that some individuals or couples only have one or two rental units, but they purchased them as a corporation. This bill prevents corporations from using the personal use exemption. This is a problem that was pointed out during our committee, and the parliamentary assistant said, "We recognize that this is the outcome of this bill." In response to one of the presenters on this issue, the Liberal member from Durham said: "There are a number of issues that you raised, especially one that I took some interest in, the own-use provision in the bill. It's fair to say that you wouldn't do something like that, but it was being abused by a certain faction. It's something where we wouldn't want your relative, your mother or your grandmother, not to have somewhere to go, so it's something that we would probably look at. We have to look at that."

But the government failed to put forward an amendment to fix the problem. When we put forward an amendment that would exempt individuals or couples who own less than three units, the government voted it down.

It gets worse. Let's say that you move your elderly mother into an apartment in your home to care for her for six months, and then either she needs more care and moves into a nursing home, or worse, she passes away. The original bill said it would be deemed bad faith if you rented that apartment out again at a higher rent within a year.

We understood that. It is to prevent people from claiming they needed the apartment for personal use when they just wanted to rent it at a higher rate. But during committee, the government supported an NDP amendment that went much further. Now it is deemed bad faith if you rent that apartment again during that first year, even if it is at a lower rent. But it is not a year: When you add the notice period, it's 14 months. A lot of things can change over that length of time.

Imagine your child moving home because they can't find work, so you give them proper notice and they move into the apartment in your house. Luckily, they find work in another town just two months later. You now have to leave that apartment vacant for the rest of the 14 months or it is considered bad faith. This change means that good, affordable units will be sitting empty. That is the exact opposite of what we were trying to achieve.

We put forward a motion to create a committee made up of both landlords and tenants to monitor and report on the supply of new rental units. Adding a requirement to report on the amount of new supply was requested by both the Federation of Rental-housing Providers of Ontario and the Ontario board of trade. Of course, the government voted that down.

We put forward a number of amendments to make the situation easier for good tenants and good landlords. We put forward amendments that would have allowed tenants and landlords to provide notice by email, where both parties agree. This was requested by a number of stakeholders, and it was one of the items from the government's consultation to encourage small landlords.

We also put forward amendments to help these tenants and landlords who are facing challenges with second-hand smoke. A survey found that all things being equal, over 80% of people would choose smoke-free housing. As was pointed out at committee, 70% of people at lower income levels do not smoke. If a tenant has signed a lease with a non-smoking clause, our amendment would have allowed the landlord to enforce it without having to prove that the smoking in the building has caused damage or interfered with reasonable enjoyment, as long as the landlord lived in the same building and the building has three or less units. Saskatchewan has legislation which provides for similar enforcement of no-smoking policies. This amendment was requested by the Canadian Cancer Society, the Lung Association and the Non-Smokers' Rights Association.

0930

The government has actually been funding an organization called Smoke-Free Housing Ontario, but when it came to supporting an amendment that creates smoke-free housing, the government voted it down. The Smoking and Health Action Foundation, which also is supported by the Ontario government, said, "The Ministry of Housing should play a much larger role in promoting smoke-free multi-unit housing." They also pointed out that seniors and children are particularly affected by secondary smoke in multi-residential buildings. This amendment was designed for small landlords who are considering renting one or two units in their home.

Bill 124 introduced a new standard lease which on the surface looks fine, but the government introduced a loophole which allows tenants to use this to break their existing lease. An existing tenant can request a new standard lease from their landlord, and then refuse to sign it and use that to break their lease. We put forward an amendment to say that if the tenant and the landlord have already agreed upon a written lease, the tenant can still request a new standard lease, but they cannot use not signing the lease as an excuse to break their lease. But the government—again, you guessed it—voted it down.

If this government is so concerned that tenants and landlords are not aware of what is legal to include in a lease, perhaps they should have been spending money on advertising to educate people on that. Instead, they spent millions on advertising to congratulate themselves on the pension program, or advertising a rate reduction before the legislation was even introduced.

Over the past few years we've seen a number of stories about professional tenants: people who know the system and repeatedly move into apartments and stop paying their rent, knowing it will be months before they can be evicted. The Ontario Chamber of Commerce says that after tenants stop paying rent, the landlord needs to wait 14 days to file with the board, 30 to 60 days to get a hearing date, five to 10 days after the hearing to get the order, 11 days before filing with the sheriff and seven days before the sheriff can evict the tenant. This amounts to 67 to 102 days' process, and the landlord losing two to three months of rent, assuming that the tenant paid last month's rent deposit.

We put forward an amendment that, after the Landlord and Tenant Board has issued an order of eviction, would reduce the delay before the sheriff can act to five days. This reduction would only impact people where the Landlord and Tenant Board has already decided against them, and the sheriff is needed to enforce the order; but it would prevent professional tenants from further dragging out the process. In some cases, it may also shorten the process just enough that the landlord may be able to rent it again before the next month. However, again, the government voted it down.

One of the things we heard from both tenants and landlords is that it takes too long to get a hearing at the Landlord and Tenant Board. This is hard on tenants who are looking for significant repairs, and hard on landlords faced with professional tenants. The Ontario Chamber of Commerce is recommending that the government provide one-time funding to immediately reduce the backlog. This would help tenants and landlords. They also recommended that we look at more innovative ways for the system to work, such as the one in British Columbia where tenants and landlords can hold hearings by telephone. This would be particularly helpful for people in the north and rural areas, where they may not have to wait for someone to travel to their area.

Just last year, the government was worried about the impact of professional tenants and the fact they were taking advantage of the system. In Kingston, it took a man six months to evict tenants that had farm animals living in the house and had done over \$30,000 worth of damage. Afterwards, CBC News reported that the Minister of Housing was worried about landlords like him pulling out of the market when the rental units are in such short supply. Minister Ballard was quoted as saying: "If it's enough to scare off someone from renting a suite in their basement, we don't want to have that happen. So we need to look at legislation, and that's what we're doing."

But this legislation wouldn't help that landlord and wouldn't change his decision not to rent long term anymore. That is just one more unit unavailable when we are already facing dramatically low vacancy rates.

This legislation is discouraging landlords large and small. The Federation of Rental-housing Providers of Ontario recently surveyed their members and found that 20,000 rental units that were in the planning or application stages are now at risk of not being built. According to a recent media report, Cary Green, whose family has spent generations building rental units in Toronto, says the uncertainty over the province's proposed changes means his company now is taking a second look at its latest roster of projects. He said, "We've got 1,200 units that we are looking at putting on the market as new rentals. And now we've got to go back and look at each building individually and make sure it's sustainable."

"My only message to the government is: it's finally not broke. Don't fix it. Don't mess around with it."

In RioCan REIT's recent quarterly financial statement to investors, they said that as a result of the rent control announcement: "It is possible that future projects may be completed with a greater portion of condominium units

than we had initially envisioned.” These are units that we needed in Ontario. The fact that we have bidding wars for apartments is a direct result of low supply. To ensure that tenants have access to good, affordable apartments, we need more supply.

The government says that they understand, but in policy they continue to do the opposite. They tilt policies in favour of professional tenants. They add more red tape and delays to the planning and building processes. They add additional costs through more development charges and inclusionary zoning. All of these things add up and are making housing in Ontario more unaffordable.

One of the other factors that has contributed to housing unaffordability in Ontario is the rapidly increasing cost of hydro. We have all heard the stories of people in Ontario who have been forced to choose between hydro to heat their homes and paying for necessities like food and prescriptions. Landlords have been hit with those same increases. It means that either they have to cut maintenance and other expenses or they need to pass the costs on to tenants. Neither option is good.

The real solution is to address the factors that are driving up the cost of hydro—stop signing contracts for expensive energy that we don’t need and stop paying hydro executives over a million dollars a year. Instead, this government is putting another band-aid solution in place. They are simply saying that if landlords have extraordinary increases in utility costs, they can no longer share those costs with the tenants. That doesn’t solve the problem.

What happens to all the landlords who include utilities in their rent in four years when they get another major increase in hydro rates? The senior on fixed income who added a second unit to help pay her hydro bill will now be faced with increasing rates, paying a hydro bill for two people instead of one. Instead, since the tenant doesn’t pay any portion of the increase, there is no incentive for them to conserve.

This government needs to focus on solving the real problems instead of doing quick fixes and photo-ops. As a recent QP briefing story said, “Just like her ‘fair hydro’ policy, I think almost every thoughtful person would assess Wynne’s housing plan as ‘good politics, but bad public policy.’” We all want to stop the increases in hydro rates, but burying the costs so they can be paid back later with interest doesn’t solve that problem. We all want affordable, good apartments for tenants, but the only way we’re going to achieve that long term is to address housing supply, and this bill does nothing to solve that problem; it just makes it worse.

We are not the only ones who have concerns. The Liberal member from Beaches–East York said, “The rent controls that were brought in by the previous NDP government under Bob Rae decimated the affordable housing market in Toronto and other communities in Ontario because it didn’t allow the private sector to continue to build.” He went on to say, “I would resist, tremendously, any amendment to this legislation which would bring back rent control.” Just yesterday on Twitter he called it a “blunt instrument.”

His views were shared by a former Liberal Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, who said, “The proposed legislation would also encourage investment in the rental housing market by continuing to exempt units built after 1991 from rent controls. These provisions are and remain significant contributors to a favourable investment climate that would foster the renewal of Ontario’s rental housing supply.”

0940

We need to encourage more building so tenants in Ontario have a choice. It is the only way to end the bidding wars that current tenants are facing.

Just two weeks ago, we put forward an amendment to Bill 68 which would have streamlined the planning process to put them back to what they were when the Liberal government was elected, but the government, again, voted that down. Those are the types of measures that will increase our supply. Instead, this government is pushing ahead with measures for which they have very little data to prove where they would work and a lot of experts who are saying they won’t.

Before I close, I just wanted to raise one more point on data. As I pointed out multiple times in this House, the government is not leading by example. We still don’t have the latest annual report with statistics from the Landlord and Tenant Board, even though it is a legislative requirement to have that tabled as part of the annual report of the Social Justice Tribunals over nine months ago. That is the responsibility of the Attorney General, but it seems that the Minister of Housing should have been looking for that information before he tabled the bill. Perhaps one of them will eventually follow up. If he’d had that information, he may have come up with a totally different idea of how we have to deal with the challenge we are presently facing in the housing industry in Ontario today.

We need policy that is based on evidence, not photo ops. We need policy that is designed to achieve good, long-term results and not be a short-term political band-aid. It is the only way to really ensure good, affordable rental units for tenants and to once again have the dream of home ownership within the reach of all people of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It’s a pleasure to speak to Bill 124, the Rental Fairness Act.

Let me start out with a bit of a history lesson, if I could. Just before we broke last fall for the Thanksgiving weekend, the member for London West had the floor and was speaking to Bill 7, the Promoting Affordable Housing Act. She gave us, in great detail, the need for more affordable housing in her city.

She told us of the 11,000 people who are among the working poor in London. She told us that there are 6,000 rent-geared-to-income units within the 8,000 social housing spaces available in her region. The member for London West also told this House that there were 2,800 names on the waiting list for affordable housing in her

area, including 1,000 families with young, vulnerable children. I spoke to her comments. I reminded the House of the 85,000 on the waiting list for affordable housing in Toronto.

We were all speaking of the need to find solutions to the affordable housing crisis in Ontario.

I just misspoke, Speaker. Allow me to correct my record. I said, "We were all speaking"; I should have said that some of us were speaking to the need for options to affordable housing. That's because the Liberal member for Beaches–East York then stood up and said—and I quote from Hansard from Thursday, October 6, 2016: "I would resist, tremendously, any amendment to this legislation which would bring back rent control."

Mr. Wayne Gates: Who said that?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: That was the member from Beaches–East York. As you know, he never speaks softly in this House. You can hear him without a microphone. I mention that, of course, because he seems to be kind of quiet these days as we discuss another of his own party's bills. This one, the Rental Fairness Act, brings back rent control in Ontario in a massive way, something he so tremendously opposed just a few weeks ago. What happened?

Last fall, the member from Beaches–East York and his Liberal colleagues were dead set against rent control. Here in the spring, it's a key plank in their re-election campaign. You've got to love it. I am guessing that it may have something to do with the buzz created by the private member's bill introduced by my friend from Toronto–Danforth, Mr. Tabuns.

On the 16th of March, he told us he was bringing in Bill 106, the Rent Protection for All Tenants Act. We asked for unanimous consent for the bill on the 6th of April, but of course the Liberals and their Conservative birds of a feather voted it down. The housing minister introduced his own bill on the 24th of April. We rushed it through a committee hearing. Not one amendment was accepted from the official opposition. Mind you, two amendments were accepted, and I thank the member from Ottawa–Vanier for accepting those amendments, from the NDP—a bit of a rarity, I must say.

I always find it somewhat amusing. We're in the House, they bring in this closure to cut off debate—the time allocation—and someone will stand up on the Liberal side and will say, "We've heard enough debate. We've got to get it to committee. Here are the delegations. Make amendments and fashion a better bill." They never accept any amendments, normally. They didn't do it when we talked about the municipal bill recently. Anyway, not one amendment from the Conservatives or the NDP was entertained on the municipal bill, but the NDP did get two in on this one.

In the rush to get this bill to the House today, the Liberals cut off debate at committee at 5 o'clock, and then we worked on the remaining amendments in silence. We couldn't debate them. That was stunning to the delegations in the audience, who came to hear if their suggestions were being taken seriously.

Let me take time here to inform the House what some of these delegations had suggested. By the way, Mr. Crack did a great job of chairing the committee, the member for Stormont–Dundas—no. Where are you from?

Mr. Grant Crack: Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. Speaker, thank you. I shouldn't have said "Mr. Crack," I know.

A small landlord from Thunder Bay, Derek Schmidt, called in to tell us that the Landlord and Tenant Board process is in dire need of attention. It takes way too long to get to a decision-making date.

Arun Pathak, the president of the Hamilton and District Apartment Association, which represents the owners and managers of more than 30,000 units, called for a portable shelter allowance. He also called for changes to the Landlord and Tenant Board to make the system better, fairer and faster.

Jim Murphy, the president and CEO of the Federation of Rental-housing Providers of Ontario, argued against the bill's proposal for a standardized lease, saying that there should be provisions for specific clauses that are unique to the properties of his 2,300 members, who own or manage over 350,000 units across Ontario.

The Toronto board of trade sent my friend Jeff Parker along to speak of their 12,000 members. He reminded us that 80,000 people a year are now moving into Toronto, and he asked for an annual report to the House on the progress of the Fair Housing Plan.

John Plumadore is a tenant. He represents other tenants living at Brentwood Towers. That's a five-complex building with 950 units. They've had to pay 10 above-guideline increases over the past 15 years for minor building upgrades, with absolutely no evidence of the need for these things. When you get to the Landlord and Tenant Board and you say, "Show me what you have. Show me the evidence," the landlord doesn't have to do it. He just says, "This is how much I spent on this list of stuff." He doesn't itemize it. You don't know if you're getting what you paid for or not. There was no evidence required at all. His members do have a lease. It's 11 pages long, and he says that you would have to be a Philadelphia lawyer to figure it all out.

Dania Majid and Jonathan Ho came, representing the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario. They thanked the government as well as Mr. Tabuns, the member from Toronto–Danforth, for bringing in his rent control bill. They suggested that when large landlords evict a tenant because they want the unit for their own personal use, they should have to pay an amount equal to three months' rent—not one month, but three months' rent—which is consistent with what they have to pay if the landlord wants to demolish the unit or convert it to condominium status. They also suggested the landlord should provide an affidavit, signed by the family member wishing to move into the house, to demonstrate that they're moving in in good faith. In conclusion, they said that the bill was a good first step, but measures such as vacancy decontrol must be taken. We've got to do

something about vacancy decontrol. That's when the landlord kicks you out by any means possible just so he can jack up the rent for the next tenant coming in.

The ACTO also told us of the many illegal clauses that exist in leases, such as no pets, no children and special charges for guests that stay over. Some people are so desperate for housing in the market, Speaker, they'll settle for anything and they'll sign anything, just to get a roof over their heads.

Chris Yaccato from the Lung Association was disappointed with the government because they've had previous discussions with the ministry during the consultation period on the bill. They were left with the impression that the bill would deal with the problems related to second-hand smoke in multi-residential buildings. He said it's an issue for an estimated 800,000 people in Ontario. His CEO has sent the minister a letter expressing some deep disappointment about that, and the fact that testing for radon exposure wasn't in there either. He's of the opinion that healthy homes were put on the back burner by this government with this bill.

0950

Just so you know, Speaker, exposure to radon gas is related to 850 deaths a year in Ontario. Next to smoking, it's the second-leading cause of lung cancer.

The Greater Toronto Apartment Association was more concerned that the act doesn't provide the necessary incentives for the development of a new supply of purpose-built rental units. Daryl Chong said he was representing the views of his members. He speaks for owners and operators of 150,000 apartments—not condos.

We heard from a relatively small landlord from rural Ontario, Patti Jo McLellan Shaw. Her family owns Hapfield Developments. The business was started by her father, Hap, back in 1966. They now have 73 units spread over 15 buildings in rural Ontario. Her property taxes are 1.75 times those charged on family homes. The bill sets the property tax rate for new purpose-built multi-residential buildings at a 1-to-1 ratio, which she says continues the discrimination against her 73 tenants. Since her company is registered as a corporation, should her mother one day decide to move in to one of the family's better units, she won't be able to, because corporations can't evict you for their own personal use. The Liberal member for Durham, Mr. Anderson, told her, "We will take note of that." Of course, they may have noted it, but they still didn't make any changes on my suggested amendment on that issue.

Speaker, just so you know, Patti Jo said her highest rent is \$800 a month, and there's, of course, another \$200 for utilities. She said that in one of her communities—in Mount Forest, for example—tenants pay \$120 for water and sewer. "It's not metered, so our little Mrs. Olive Aitken, who ... is 96, pays the same as a house that has four bedrooms and multiple occupants."

We had a great presentation from David Hulchanski from the faculty of social work at the University of Toronto. He is of the opinion that the problem with rental supply has little to do with rent regulations. Rent regula-

tions are a response to the problem, not the cause of the problem. He said our rental housing problem has everything to do with the nature and type of rental housing. In Ontario, he said we have a classic case of market failure, and consumer protection is required when markets fail. Rent regulation is simply consumer protection.

He also said, "Vacancy decontrol in a failed market simply allows for plain and simple rent gouging. There is no excuse for 10%, 20%, 30%, 40% rent increases when nothing has changed other than the fact that some people are fortunate enough to own something that is not being supplied and is absolutely needed."

Professor Hulchanski thought that small landlords of up to three units should be exempted from legislation preventing them from evicting a tenant and moving a family into the unit.

My friends from ACORN Canada, who work with low- and moderate-income folks, came to the committee. They agreed that rent control should be placed on all buildings. They also asked for a rent registry. When it comes to elevators being repaired before a rent above the guideline was allowed, they said that provision doesn't go far enough. They want all outstanding health and safety orders corrected before the AGIs would even be considered. They singled out Northview Apartment REIT, which is traded on the Toronto Stock Exchange, with assets of \$3 billion. They said that tenants like Marcia Powel have been unable to get simple work orders corrected by the building managers and are left to deal with issues such as a broken fridge, bugs and broken cabinets on their own, and are still hit with a rent increase.

From the Quinte Region Landlords Association, we heard from Robert Gentile. He said it was fundamentally unfair to make landlords pay the tenant anything just so they could use their own property. He didn't like the requirement of a standardized lease, asking, "Since when is government in the business of forcing private entrepreneurs to use government-written contracts for their businesses?" Mr. Gentile told us he had approximately four tenants of his own.

He didn't like paying so much in hydro, but the member from Durham, according to Hansard, said that under the fair hydro plan, "... you'll probably get the 25% and [are] probably eligible for up to another 50% more in reductions in hydro rates," to which Mr. Gentile replied, "Rates have gone up so much over the last three or four years that without being an expert on the figures, our concern is that the corrections, or the adjustments, that the government is making are going to perhaps simply minimize the increases that have already occurred over the last few years...." Of course, we all agree with that statement.

The Non-Smokers' Rights Association came. Andrew Noble wants smoke-free clauses added to the standard lease, saying 80% of people surveyed would choose smoke-free housing.

I'm going to skip along a bit.

Geordie Dent of the Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations: They provide services to 60,000 tenants a

year. His research shows rental housing development is impacted by zoning and tax incentives but not rent control. He's heard from many tenants who have had to pay up to \$1,000 for rent increases in the past few months.

Let me take a moment at this juncture and tell you about some of the amendments we in the NDP introduced as we tried to improve the bill.

We wanted to help out the smaller landlords. We set a limit at five units. If you had five or more units and wanted to evict tenants for personal use, you would have to pay them three months' rent. Landlords with fewer than five would only have to give one month's rent. Larger landlords have greater flexibility in these situations, and that would incent them to try to find other options. The other parties didn't see the merit of that.

We tried to do something about vacancy decontrol, to stop landlords from finding all manner of excuses to force you out. Again, the Liberals said vacancy decontrol is essential to the way the system works in Ontario, which is not a good thing, I don't believe.

We did a lot of things on behalf of ACORN and the other people, and we didn't get much. But the Liberals did accept two of our amendments, and we're very thankful for that. Let me say at this point, as I know I'm running out of time, we presented 16 amendments and we had two accepted. The Conservatives tried 17 but were shut out.

Interjection: No.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Yes, I know. It's tough to hear.

At this time, Speaker, let me thank the member for Toronto–Danforth again for all of his hard work on rent control. Mr. Tabuns has worked with local and provincial tenants' groups for many years on these issues. He never gave up on them; he never stopped fighting. His private member's bill prodded the Liberals into action, as did, I must say and acknowledge, a series carried on the CBC about the outrageous examples of rent gouging in the Toronto area—rents being raised by \$1,000, rents doubling, and rates going up 30% to 40% and more.

The hits on the Liberal government just kept on coming and coming and coming. They panicked. They had to back down. They turned their backs on some of their largest donors, those who have propped them up financially for years, and they brought in rent controls, which their own members were stating in the House just a few weeks ago they would resist tremendously—"tremendously," said the member from Beaches–East York.

I wonder if the member for Beaches–East York now regrets being so bold with his words. Having to eat crow is not an easy thing to do for some people, especially those who crow the loudest in this chamber, Speaker.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Order. It's never too early to warn or name people, okay? You know the rules. The next time I get up, you know what? There are going to be consequences.

I return to the member from Windsor–Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker, for keeping that rowdy group under control over there.

I know the Liberals didn't want to head into next year's election with a rent control millstone hanging around their necks, and the politics came into play after the member for Toronto–Danforth was on the record with his private member's bill.

Mind you, this bill does nothing to increase the supply of affordable housing. There's no money in there to help the city of Toronto with its \$2.6-billion capital repair backlog.

Interjection.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Speaker, I have to chuckle at the member for Beaches–East York, because the last time I talked about that issue—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Order.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: We're friends. Speaker, we are friends.

The last time we were in the House discussing that backlog in social housing repairs that the city of Toronto needs, my friend from Beaches–East York called the city of Toronto a terrible landlord, the worst in the province, as I recall, for the way that social agency has been run in recent years. He's been burning his bridges on this file at every turn—don't bring in rent control; they're a terrible landlord.

We can't forget that, in 2013, as Premier, Premier Wynne and the Liberals cut from the provincial budget the \$129 million that they had been giving each and every year to the city of Toronto to help fund the provincial share of Toronto's social housing programs. That cut has come back to bite them where it hurts on this file.

The NDP is on record as saying we will step up to the plate. We will pay our fair share of the cost of that repair backlog in the social housing stock in the city of Toronto's portfolio.

There are other factors which separate us from the Liberals. The people of Ontario are learning about them, and we look forward to making sure those differences are front and centre by this time next year because, as we all know, we're heading into an election, and as we all know, the only reason this bill is in front of us today is because we are heading into an election. After the member for Toronto–Danforth brought in his rent-control-for-all bill, the Liberals panicked. They jumped forward with this bill. They rushed it through, and here we are on third and final reading.

I thank you so much for the wonderful job you're doing this morning, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 3, 2017, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Naqvi has moved third reading of Bill 124, An Act to amend Residential Tenancies Act, 2006. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear noes.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

I believe we have a recorded vote. It will be deferred until after question period today.

Third reading vote deferred.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Orders of the day.

I recognize the President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Liz Sandals: No further business, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I will recess the House until 10:30 this morning.

The House recessed from 1003 to 1030.

NOTICE OF REASONED AMENDMENT

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 71(b), the member from Nipissing has notified the Clerk of his intention to file notice of a reasoned amendment to the motion for second reading of Bill 134, An Act to implement 2017 Budget measures. The order for second reading of Bill 134, therefore, cannot be called today.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Bob Delaney: Back in 2004, my very first legislative page was a young lady named Jaimie Alexandria Lee. Although she's not here today, she's turning 26 years old and is about to complete her bar exams and become a lawyer. Happy birthday, Jaimie.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's my pleasure to welcome a friend of my daughter's all the way from Mexico who is with us today: Jay Gearing in the members' gallery.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I've got some great guests here from my riding of Oakville. My Oakville Provincial Youth Advisory Committee is here today to speak to a number of my colleagues. Please help me welcome Allison Headrick, Henry Mann, Elora Franklin, Anam Khan, Kristin Ashworth, Nikhi Bhambra, Colten Slater, Emily Ioffe and Christien Rivard, who is one of my summer interns. Please welcome them to Queen's Park.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I would like to welcome two classes from two schools here today: the Maranatha Christian School, grades 7 to 10; and Maple View school, grades 5 to 9—from my riding.

M^{me} France Gélinas: We have a few members of ONA with us in the gallery, starting with Lawrence Walter, Sheila Riddell, Cathryn Hoy, Colleen Taylor, Melissa Grenier, Jackie Chesterman and France O'Connell, not to mention Nancy Donaldson, Ruth Featherstone and Susan Archibald. Thank you very much for coming to Queen's Park.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm just going to ask the indulgence of the House. I have a list of people that I want to introduce. They are from our Don Valley West Civic Engagement Volunteering Activities Club. Students are here with Afie and Wendy, who run my constituency office. They are Aislin Perry, Amelia Lin, Nafi Hamid, Huda Mukhtar, Hussam Sheikh, Julie Sue-A-Quan, Kifaayat Hamid, Madeleine Wredenhagen,

Natasha Pelletier, Olivia Hamilton, Saad Mukhtar, Sharai Doiron and Tia Sato-Li.

They are involved in volunteer activities across the riding, and I want to welcome them here today.

I also want to welcome Tina Forgione, who's the mother of Andrew who is one of the issues guys in my office.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to introduce here in the House today Mr. Simon Keslassy, who is the president of the Jewish Moroccan Community of Toronto, as well as Faouzi Metouilli, who are here with the delegation from Morocco, which I will leave to you to introduce.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You will.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: But I wanted to introduce Simon and Faouzi. Welcome. Bienvenue à tous.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I just wanted to welcome a couple of guests of the page from my riding, Kate Winterton. Her mother, Jennifer Krikorian, and her aunt Jacqueline Krikorian are here in the public gallery.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'd like to welcome Nicole Sanvido to the Legislature today. Nicole is a constituent of mine and attends Queen's University. She's here today to shadow some of our staff at the Ministry of Labour.

M^{me} Gila Martow: Merci beaucoup, monsieur le Président. Vous savez que le Maroc est un pays francophone. Je veux aussi accueillir la délégation du Maroc, M. Simon Keslassy—il vient de ma circonscription—et M. Faouzi Metouilli. Bienvenue, tout le monde.

Hon. Chris Ballard: I'm delighted to introduce relatives John and Shannon Green and my nephew Sean Green. Welcome to the House.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: It's my pleasure to rise today and introduce Khalil Heron, a student from Joseph Brant Public School, and his mother, Farah Heron. They're here to have lunch with me today. Please welcome them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Now, as it is the tradition of the Speaker to introduce the guests in the Speaker's gallery, we have with us, accompanied by diplomatic officials from the embassy of Morocco, Mr. El Habib Nadir, Mrs. Fatima Taoussi, Mr. Yassine Radi, Mrs. Imane Benrabia, and Mrs. Ichrak El Bouyousfi, the delegation from the Parliament of Morocco. Welcome to Queen's Park.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On Monday, May 15, 2017, the member from Leeds–Grenville, Mr. Clark, raised a question of privilege concerning advertising on electricity pricing. According to the member, a number of items which were issued or authorized by the government alluded to future price cuts and other changes in the electricity sector. The member alleges that they constitute a prima facie case of contempt by the Minister of Energy because they presume a timeline and outcome of a bill currently before the House. The government House leader, Mr. Naqvi, also spoke to the matter, and both members filed written submissions.

Having had the opportunity to review the written notices of the member from Leeds–Grenville, the oral arguments and written submissions of the member from Leeds–Grenville and the government House leader, and other relevant precedents and authorities, I am now prepared to rule on the matter.

This matter is directly related to my earlier ruling on March 23, 2017. In that instance, the member from Simcoe–Grey had raised a substantially similar question of privilege, and based upon apparently the same materials as are in question in the current instance.

Those materials are:

(1) An undated screenshot of a Facebook advertisement from Ontario Energy.

(2) A screenshot of a retweet of a similar ad to the one from Facebook, showing the date March 2.

(3) A screenshot of a retweet of a graphic containing the Hydro One name and logo, showing the date March 2.

(4) An Ontario Liberal Party publication, of unknown provenance, referring to the “Fair Hydro Plan.”

(5) Two audio advertisements about the “Fair Hydro Plan” sponsored by the government of Ontario.

In my earlier ruling, I was not able to find that a *prima facie* case of contempt had been made out largely due to the fact, and I paraphrase, that to do so would have required me to have been capable of conducting, or to have some sort of jurisdiction to conduct, a legal analysis of the legislative framework that would have been necessary to produce the results alluded to in the ads and other items. Speakers do not undertake legal analysis, make legal findings or attempt to interpret the law.

That is as true in the present case, as it was in March. So the question of whether or not the specific piece of legislation currently before the House, Bill 132, is the sole available mechanism for the government of Ontario to implement its “Fair Hydro Plan” is not one that I can study or answer. Were there, or are there, other viable means to give effect to electricity rate reductions? I cannot know.

However, now that a bill is before the House which has provided the genesis of the complaint from the member for Leeds–Grenville, I can examine if any of these items do what the ads did in the seminal case of the government advertising that was referred to by the member, that being the 1997 ruling by Speaker Stockwell.

1040

Let me remind the House of what Speaker Stockwell had to say. In addressing definitively worded statements in government ads about municipal reform in Toronto, he stated:

“How is one to interpret such unqualified claims? In my opinion, they convey the impression that the passage of the requisite legislation was not necessary or was a foregone conclusion, or that the assembly and the Legislature had a *pro forma*, tangential, even inferior role in the legislative and law-making process, and in doing so, they appear to diminish the respect that is due to the

House. I would not have come to this view had these claims or proposals—and that is all that they are—been qualified by a statement that they would only become law if and when the Legislature gave its stamp of approval to them.”

Let me begin by examining the five items provided to me by the member from Leeds–Grenville that I mentioned before. The Ontario Liberal Party ad and the Hydro One ad are not the responsibility of the government of Ontario or the Minister of Energy, so I accord them no value for the purpose of this particular consideration.

As for the Facebook and Twitter ads, which are substantially the same, I can report that they each predominantly feature both a Web address and a separate link to the “Fair Hydro Plan” website. Right on the landing page of this site is the following language:

“Ontario has introduced legislation that would, if passed, reduce electricity bills ... etc.; and, “In addition, if the proposed legislation is passed, your bill ... etc.”

In short, the language of this website is conditional throughout with respect to the “Fair Hydro Plan.”

Likewise, the audio ads that the member for Leeds–Grenville provided, which are archived from links on the Toronto Star website, direct listeners to the same “Fair Hydro Plan” website as the Facebook and Twitter ads I just mentioned. I take note of the fact that the member from Leeds–Grenville advises that these audio ads were aired some time during March break two months ago.

The ads make bold statements, as I noted in my March 23 ruling, but they also have to be taken as a whole. The predominant links and the references to the “Fair Hydro Plan” website are just as much a part of the ad as the other statements in them. The advertising and messaging on Bill 132 that has been drawn to my attention, including that provided by the government House leader, contains language that, in my opinion, is suitably deferential to the requisite and superior role of this House in first passing the legislation to enact the plan.

Finally, the 1997 Stockwell ruling precedent that has rightly become so influential in the area of government advertising was made in a context where legislation was then currently before the House, though the then government advertised about its application in a way that conveyed the impression that it was a done deal. I have not had similar advertising specific to Bill 132 brought to my attention.

For the various reasons just mentioned, I cannot find a *prima facie* case of contempt has been established in this matter. In closing, I will say that the fact that the advertising and other messaging around Bill 132 is conditional in nature and explicitly recognizes the need for the bill to first pass in the Legislative Assembly is, in my view, both a vindication of the direction established by Speaker Stockwell 20 years ago and a full answer to the grievances of the members for Simcoe–Grey and Leeds–Grenville in the current instance.

I thank the member from Leeds–Grenville and the government House leader for their contributions to this matter.

Mr. Steve Clark: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order, the member from Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your ruling. I'm very mindful of your ruling and what you said, and I look forward to hopefully receiving a copy through Hansard today.

I guess my message is to the government: that, regardless of what the Speaker ruled, you set a very—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Be seated, please. The member will be seated.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. Whatever the member's feelings are about the issue—first of all, if he wishes to challenge the Chair, go to his House leader and ask for confidence in the Speaker.

Second of all, when the member realizes I'm standing, he sits. Therefore, I'm going to start the member with a warning.

It is now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

PROBATION AND PAROLE SERVICES

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. Last year, there was a headline from North Bay that read like a plot of *Law and Order: SVU*. The headline was, "North Bay Mother Awakes to Nightmare of Stranger Attacking Child." The attacker was charged with many crimes, but among them were two counts of breach of a conditional sentence order.

That was one year ago this month, and what has this government done? They've done nothing to watch over violent criminals on probation and conditional sentences. It's unacceptable.

In the last year, how many other children have been harmed by violent offenders? How long are we going to wait until the government will make sure that criminals are checked?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services will want to comment on this.

Obviously, we all have to take these situations very, very seriously. Our government takes the safety of our communities extremely seriously. We work in partnership with our police services and justice partners to make Ontario one of the safest jurisdictions in North America.

Of course, not in any way diminishing the incident that the member opposite has identified—but for 11 straight years, Ontario has had the lowest crime rate of any province or territory in Canada. Ontario is also home to six of the 10 safest census metropolitan areas in the country.

We will continue to work with our police services, with our police partners, to make sure the right policies are in place.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: Another story out of North Bay read, "One woman and two men were arrested following a report of a stabbing Friday night that sent one person to hospital with non-life threatening injuries...."

"Following a verbal dispute with the man, one of the visitors stabbed him with a knife."

One man "was charged with assault with a weapon, aggravated assault and breach of probation."

The last charge was breach of probation. Clearly, he was a violent criminal. Did this individual receive any home visits? Of course not. He is expected, under this system, that the Liberals support, to self-report.

Mr. Speaker, give me a break. You've got a violent offender who is expected to self-report if he feels tempted to stab someone? How can the government allow this to continue?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: I guess I'll thank the member, the Leader of the Opposition, for his question, because it's actually great that I have to share with you and all Ontarians that Ontario is one of the safest jurisdictions in North America. I'm very proud that our crime rate has been decreasing for years, and offenders have been less likely, actually, to reoffend.

When you talk about what we are doing as a government here in the province—you know, we are moving forward on correctional reforms—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Is that the way it works now? Just give everybody a free pass?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): If some people can't read—I have not started on a fun note.

Finish, please.

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: I'm very proud that we are working on our correctional transformation. I always like to share and thank all of our correctional officers and our parole and probation officers, who work—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: What you just heard are government talking points. The question was, when there are violent criminals and sexual predators, how we think it's good enough to simply allow self-reporting and not have home visits.

The minister praised the probation officers. They're the ones who are whistle-blowing on this government, saying it's not good enough.

There are 4,513 criminals convicted of serious crimes out there, and we're expecting them to self-report. How many examples do I have to give? Last week, it was a case of child luring in Durham. Then it's the case in North Bay of a stabbing. How many serious criminal charges are there going to be where we have criminals out in our communities, and they think self-reporting is good enough?

1050

A very clear question to the minister: Do you think self-reporting is fair and adequate for convicted sex predators and violent criminals? Yes or no?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister.

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to say that the Leader of the Opposition, and I would say his party, talk a big talk, but their record shows otherwise. I want to remind everyone about, especially, the party leader's track—

Interjections.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: We're talking about the stabbings in North Bay.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nipissing, come to order. The member from Niagara West—Glanbrook, come to order.

Carry on.

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: I want to talk about the party opposite's leader, about his track record. He cut Canada's correctional service budget by 10%, and for those who don't know how much, that's \$295 million. He also introduced ridiculous changes to our mandatory minimums, and let's not forget about cutting award-winning programs to help our offenders in terms of reintegrating and releasing. So, Mr. Speaker—

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's not even related, Charles. You know that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

You have a wrap-up sentence.

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: Instead of playing politics with safety, we, on this side of the House, are actually committed to working with our partners.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. It seems that yesterday the Liberals launched a new ad campaign about their budget. How much more money will the Liberals be spending on these clearly partisan budget advertisements? Can you tell us a number? Ontarians deserve to know how much of their money this government is using to sell their tired old lines.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I have to say that, on this side of the House, we are very happy that the budget we have brought forward has been passed in this Legislature and will now be implemented across the province. Obviously, the member opposite is not happy about that.

He voted against OHIP+ so that four million children and young people will have access to free medication, starting January 1, 2018. He voted against that, so he is not supportive. But we believe that that is a very good and important thing for young people and families in this province.

He also doesn't want us to implement free tuition for young people in the province. He doesn't want to see \$16

billion invested in new schools in places like Ottawa, Waterloo, Thunder Bay—across the province. We think those are important investments.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: The question was on partisan government advertising, and I can see why the Premier doesn't want to answer, because they're embarrassed of how much they're abusing taxpayers.

From Wawa to Petawawa, from Owen Sound to Parry Sound—

Interjections.

Mr. Patrick Brown:—this government is wasting taxpayer money on partisan vanity ads—and they applaud; they clap when they hear about how much money they're wasting, but I can tell you Ontarians are not applauding, because it's unacceptable, it's unethical—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. Chief government whip, come to order. Minister of Children and Youth Services, come to order. Minister of Education, come to order.

Please finish your question.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, it's unacceptable, it's unethical and it's irresponsible. They are campaigning on the public dime.

My question is, for once, will they do the right thing? Will the government cancel these partisan ads that are being paid for by taxpayers? It's not right. We already have—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Barrie, come to order.

Mr. Patrick Brown:—one of the most horrific debts in the world, and you're spending more to promote your own selfish partisan purposes.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: There is one province in this country that has a law in place that forbids partisan advertising, and that province is Ontario. We are the only province that prohibits partisan advertising.

I say to the member opposite again, I understand he does not want people in the province to know about OHIP+, but we think it's important. We think it's important that the four million children and young people in this province know that on January 1, 2018, they will receive free medication. It's important to their families; it's important to them. We think—

Mr. Paul Miller: How about the 25-year-olds? What do they get? Nothing.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, come to order.

Finish, please. Wrap up.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We think it's important to implement free tuition across the province. We think it's important to build hospitals in Niagara, Windsor, Hamilton, Markdale—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward–Hastings, come to order.

Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: The Premier said that only one province has a law to prevent partisan ads. That was before this Premier. That was before this team completely eroded the powers of the Auditor General for their own partisan purpose. Right now, we have the Auditor General saying that these are partisan, self-congratulatory vanity ads, and we have the government saying, “No, the Auditor General is in favour of them.” Who do I trust? Do I trust this Liberal cabinet or do I trust the Auditor General? Mr. Speaker, I’m with the Auditor General.

They are abusing taxpayers. They are abusing taxpayers to pay for their own partisan ads. You know what? Maybe it’s because of the recent polls they have to abuse taxpayers to promote themselves, but it’s not right. They need to stop using taxpayers to sell their misguided agenda.

No one in Ontario thinks it’s right to use taxpayer money for partisan ads. Do the right thing. Pull these ads.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me remind the member opposite—because facts still matter in Ontario—that the legislation that bans partisan advertising is still in place in Ontario.

Let me just pick up on something that the Leader of the Opposition said. He talked about a misguided agenda. What is he talking about? He’s talking about OHIP+ pharmacare for young people from ages zero to 25. He’s talking about free tuition for young people from low-income families. He’s talking about building hospitals and schools across this province—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thanks to both sides, we’re now in warnings. The Minister of Children and Youth Services is warned. I’m going to get silence.

Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: He’s talking about hydro relief across the province. These are supports the people of this province need. We have the first balanced budget in nearly a decade. We are going to make investments in the people of this province because the people of this province have earned that support.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. Be seated, please.

New question.

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Hydro rates have gone up 300% under the Liberals and 50% just under this Premier. People have good

reason to be suspicious about any action the Premier takes on the hydro file, and now, leaked documents show that hydro rates will be going up even further as a result of the Premier’s scheme, causing even more scepticism about the Liberals’ handling of our electricity system in this province.

Will the Premier come clean with Ontarians on the future cost of hydro before her hydro scheme, her borrowing scheme is voted on in this Legislature?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the Minister of Energy is going to want to comment in the supplementary, but let me just say that we have been very clear—I have been very clear and the Minister of Energy has been very clear—with the people of this province that we have made investments in the electricity system in Ontario: \$50 billion to make a reliable, clean, renewable electricity grid in—

Mr. Paul Miller: Where’s that gas plant?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek is warned.

Carry on.

1100

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We’ve been clear that there was a cost associated with that and that that cost needs to be shared over the generations that are actually going to use that asset. We are bringing forward a reduction of 25% on people’s electricity bills, to be in place by the summer, and to do that we are spreading the cost over a longer period of time. That means that not just this generation today will pay for those costs, but that will be spread over a longer period of time. We’ve been very clear with the people of Ontario that that’s what we’re doing.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the Premier’s borrowing scheme will cause hydro rates to soar by over 50%. She denies this, but she hasn’t shown the people of Ontario any evidence to back up that denial.

Will the public get any additional information on how much the Premier proposes to increase hydro costs after the next election so they can provide educated, informed feedback at the committee hearings next week?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: As stated, we’re bringing forward legislation that will actually reduce everyone’s bills by up to 25% on average. It’s important that people know about this so they can understand that this government is acting to ensure that we’re making our system as affordable as can be for many of these families. Some 800,000 families that live in the rural and northern parts of our province will see a 40% to 50% reduction.

That’s what we’re doing right now, Mr. Speaker, in the short term. In the medium term, we’re ensuring that we’re holding the rates to the cost of inflation. Then, for the long term, the 2017 long-term energy plan will project where costs are going to be so people can see the transparent process that we have.

We rebuilt a system, one that is coal-free, that is clean, that is reliable, and it’s something—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier and her Liberal government have made a mess of our hydro system, and it has cost Ontario families and businesses far too much.

Interjections.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: They think it's funny, but it isn't funny when people have to make choices about paying their hydro bill or putting food on the table, or choices about keeping people employed or paying their business's electricity bill.

From the gas plant scandal to the broken promises not to sell off Hydro One to the four years—four years—of denying that there was any problem at all with people's rising hydro bills, why has this Premier had so much trouble reconciling what she says with what she does?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: In terms of reconciliation, when it comes to talking and then acting, it's this Premier who actually committed this government to bringing forward the fair hydro plan that's reducing everybody's bills across this province by 25%.

If you look at a plan that has no reconciliation and no idea of how it would ever achieve a number—it's the pamphlet that the NDP put together, Mr. Speaker. There is absolutely no way that they're going to take one cent—not a single cent—off anyone's bills. And they don't even talk about helping low-income individuals until the last page—in one line.

A large part of our plan is helping our low-income individuals, our seniors, and our on-reserve First Nations peoples that they don't even mention in their plan. This is a plan that will work for every Ontarian.

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. Leaked documents show very clearly that the Premier knows her \$40-billion borrowing scheme is going to end up costing families and businesses on their already sky-high hydro bills, but she denies that her plan is based on these documents.

Well, if the leaked information is inaccurate, Speaker, why won't the Premier just come clean and release the information that did inform her plan?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, Mr. Speaker, let me just reinforce what I have said in this House on previous days. There is a short-term, a mid-term and a long-term plan around electricity prices. We know that people need relief now. That's what the 25%, on average, reduction for all Ontarians is. It will be in place by the summer. We will then hold the rate of increase of electricity bills down for four years, to the level of inflation. Then, the long-term energy plan, which is being developed right now, will give businesses and families around the province a snapshot of just that: the long-term energy plan.

But we will continue over the medium and the long term to continue to take costs out of the system, which has happened with each one of our long-term energy

plans. We found ways to take costs out. That will continue and the people of the province—when that plan is ready, they will see it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: What the Premier neglected to say is that after four years, those bills are going to soar in Ontario by over 50%. Leaked documents show that the hydro bills will absolutely go up. Yet, the Premier's answer to this disgusting betrayal of Ontario families and businesses is: "Just trust me. Just trust me. It's going to all be fine."

Ontarians are getting pretty fed up with the "just trust me" line. It's what the Premier said before she broke her promise not to sell off Hydro One, and it's what she said about the Sudbury bribery charges right before a criminal investigation got under way. "Just trust me" is not good enough for the people of Ontario.

When will this Premier release the information she says is showing the long-term effects of her borrowing scheme so that Ontarians have all the facts before she rams this legislation through the House?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Let's be clear. We have—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Kitchener—Waterloo is warned.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, let's be clear. The fact is that 25% is coming off of everybody's bills before summer, once this legislation passes, and 50% is coming off 800,000 families' bills in northern and in rural parts of our province. That's a significant savings for these families. We're also helping small businesses and farms.

When you want to continue to talk about facts, it is this government that cleaned up the mess left by the opposition parties when they were in power and the system that they left for us to clean up—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton Mountain is warned.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I do not appreciate gestures being made by members.

Carry on.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Our plan has been praised by poverty advocates, by indigenous leaders, by business leaders and by energy experts. Francesca Dobbyn, the executive director of the United Way of Bruce Grey, says this "government is listening to people. With these positive changes, our rural community will now truly benefit from the low-cost power it produces."

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Clarity is actually what the people of this province need and deserve, but they're not getting any of it from their government. The Premier's scheme punishes families who are already struggling with their electricity bills. She is rushing it through the House and shutting down debate. Any chance of mean-

ingful public input is being truncated by this government. She claims that the leaked documents that came to light last week about the plan are inaccurate, but she refuses to come clean with the people of the province about the facts.

Why is this Premier going to such great lengths to make sure that the people don't have all the information about a plan that will affect their lives for three decades or more?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Once again, we have short-term solutions, a medium-term solution and a long-term solution. The 25% off, with all of the other programs that are coming out through the fair hydro plan, is something that all families will see right before summer. We hope to have that passed and get it into their pockets as soon as possible.

In the medium term, we are holding rates to the cost of inflation for the next four years.

When it comes to the long term, we are the only party that actually can plan long term. These parties opposite have no idea. One of them doesn't even have a plan. They have no idea on what to do when it comes to electricity. We're making sure that we're bringing forward reductions that will help families, all at the same time that we cleaned up the system. We've made sure it's clean and reliable, and it is something we should all be proud of, because people look to us to see what they can do to emulate our system.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question is for the Attorney General. Yesterday, the Attorney General suggested that the Ontario justice council's new education plan would mandate sexual assault law training for Ontario judges. That would be great news. I've been calling for this kind of training for weeks, and even tabled a private member's bill about it. The problem is that this new training plan does not mandate sexual assault law training. The training "encourage[s]" new judges to attend seminars, one of which is about sexual assault law.

1110

Mr. Speaker, this is not a solution, so my question to the Attorney General is: How can the minister suggest that this issue has been resolved when what we really have is a continuation of the status quo?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: First of all, I want to thank the member opposite and the member from Davenport for their advocacy on this very important issue. I've spoken on this issue numerous times and I've always advised all members of this House that at all times we have to respect the independence of our judiciary when it comes to matters around what training they should receive. It's a decision of the judiciary.

Therefore, on behalf of this House, on behalf of our Premier and the government, I have written to the Chief Justice of the Ontario Court of Justice and have had the chance to speak to her. She has informed me, through

correspondence, that she has now expressly mandated sexual assault training for all new judges. She has informed me that changes have been made to the education plan that is available online.

I commend the Chief Justice for taking this very important step. It is within her purview to make those decisions, and I happen to know that that express mandate is now—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Laurie Scott: Yesterday's Toronto Star article by Kristin Rushowy quotes the Ontario Judicial Council as saying that under the changes, "the legal and social context issues [around sexual assault] ... are integrated into various programs." But they are only for new judges, and I believe, from the article and the OJC, that it's not even mandatory.

I wonder: Is the minister really satisfied with his answer? It clearly doesn't meet the expectations for survivors of sexual assault, who want to be sure that the court system will treat their cases fairly. I do know that the minister cares about this issue, so my question to him is: Will he finally agree that mandated sexual assault training needs to be legislated, and will he support my bill?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Again I thank the member opposite, I thank the member from Davenport and the Premier and all members of the House for their work on this very important issue. We should never, ever undermine sexual assault, violence against women, or harassment in any shape whatsoever.

My responsibility as the Attorney General is always to work with our courts, with the judiciary, which are independent. I am sure all members will appreciate that at no point ever will we cross the line and interfere in the affairs of the judiciary, because their independence is key.

My obligation on behalf of this House and all members is to do that work, and I have been doing that work. I have been informed by the Chief Justice that the education plan for the judiciary has been updated and now expressly mandates training for new judges. I think that's a good direction. I'm confident that more can be done, and we'll continue to work on that.

OPIOID ABUSE

M^{me} France G  linas: My question is for the Premier. Ontario is in the midst of an opioid crisis that demands urgent action. People are losing their lives every day on the streets of this city. In fact, 258 people died from a drug overdose in Toronto in 2015, and that number continues to climb.

On March 20—two months ago—the Toronto Board of Health requested additional funding of \$375,000 from this government to support the Toronto overdose action plan, but this government has so far refused to provide the additional funding that's needed.

In the midst of a growing crisis of overdose deaths, when everyone recognizes that urgent action is desperate—

ly needed, why has this government failed to provide the resources that Toronto needs to help save lives?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I really appreciate the question from the member opposite. This is an incredibly serious issue that is being dealt with across the country. In fact, our Minister of Health and Long-Term Care has taken a leadership role with his colleague ministers across the country. We have an opioid strategy in place. We are gathering data. Now the federal government is coming on board, and they are putting in place a strategy that will give us better information and will mean that we'll be able to track what is going on in the country and, thereby, be able to prevent and provide better treatment.

On the Toronto-specific issue, I am aware of the request made by the city of Toronto regarding funding towards the Toronto overdose action plan. We've received their submission. It's being reviewed. I want the member to know that we are hosting a meeting of mayors, and I will say more in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: We are in the midst of a public health crisis, a crisis that is growing here in Toronto and right across our province. When local boards of health come to the Premier to set up and provide additional supports to directly save lives, this government should be ready to help, I would say, in a heartbeat. That's what urgent action means. That's the proper response to a growing crisis. That's what a crisis demands. How much longer will Toronto have to wait to get the resources to save lives and stop the overdose crisis in this city?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think the member opposite knows we are there. We are supporting three proposed safe injection sites in the city of Toronto. That was something that the city of Toronto had asked for.

The mayor of Ottawa was here a number of weeks ago. I met with him. He brought forward a plan. I said we would support that plan, and out of that meeting with the mayor—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean-Carleton is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Out of that meeting with the mayor of Ottawa came a meeting that we are hosting for all of the mayors who want to be involved. This is not just an issue that is relevant in Toronto or Ottawa. It's actually an issue that's relevant in many urban centres and in small towns. This is across the province. We need to make sure we're doing the right things, and we will be working with our municipalities, as we already are, to see what further needs to be done.

LAND USE PLANNING

Mrs. Cristina Martins: My question this morning is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. As we prepare to celebrate the Victoria Day long weekend, it is a good time to reflect on a region that is one of the most extraordinary places on the planet. It's blessed with abundant

fresh water, significant natural features like the Oak Ridges moraine and the Niagara Escarpment, excellent farmland and a moderate, though sometimes unpredictable, climate.

These assets support a high quality of life and economic opportunities. They help make the GGH's dynamic economy Canada's largest economic engine. That is fuelled by a diverse and talented population.

Today, our government released updated land use plans for the region that will protect our natural resources and support future prosperity. Would the minister please provide some details on today's announcement?

Hon. Bill Mauro: The member is correct. Today, our government released four updated land use plans that will help grow the greater Golden Horseshoe. The region is a success story and attracts people from all over the country and around the world. Already home to 9.5 million people, the greater Golden Horseshoe is forecasted to grow by approximately 50% over the next 25 years.

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the Greenbelt Plan, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and the Niagara Escarpment Plan set out an overarching strategy of where and how future growth should be accommodated and what we need to protect for current and future generations.

The updates will help us achieve a more efficient use of land, resources and infrastructure, so that we can reduce sprawl, ensure the region is growing in a way that protects our vital assets and building communities that are vibrant, healthy and prosperous. The updates are the result of a significant amount of work and extensive consultation, which I will speak about more in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Thanks to the minister for his answer. I was particularly happy to hear our government's reaffirmed commitment to protecting the greenbelt as were the many dozens, perhaps, if not hundreds, of constituents in my riding of Davenport who called, wrote and visited my office to express their support.

Our government established the greenbelt in 2005. I understand that we are now growing the greenbelt to include 21 new urban river valleys and associated wetlands, plus five new parcels of land. We've also extended greenbelt-like protections for natural heritage, water and agriculture to the entire greater Golden Horseshoe area. This will help protect sensitive lands for generations to come without constraining development.

1120

I appreciate the work that has gone into these changes. I understand that many people provided input. Would the minister elaborate on the consultation process that led up to today's announcement?

Hon. Bill Mauro: Again, thank you to the member. We're happy, as a government, to reaffirm our commitment to the greenbelt and the principles it was founded on.

This process began in February 2015. The first stage saw the establishment of an expert panel headed by the

Honourable David Crombie. I want to give David my heartfelt thanks for his leadership, and to recognize panel members for their recommendations.

Throughout the process, which included a six-month consultation period in 2016 and a number of meetings with municipal leaders, we heard unanimous support for the goals of these plans. “One size doesn’t fit all” was something we also heard a great deal about during the consultation, and we’ve taken that into account in the final revisions to the plan. They provide greater flexibility that recognizes local circumstances without compromising the objectives of the plans.

These new land use plans set the foundations for a sustainable, healthy, vibrant and prosperous greater Golden Horseshoe. They’ve been shaped by thousands of people across the province through a lot of very hard work. I would like to thank all of them today, including my staff, who have worked very hard on this over the course of the last 12 months.

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Speaker, \$1 million can go a long way here in the province. It could help children with special needs, or people struggling to pay their hydro bills. But instead of helping those in Ontario who need it the most, the government has decided to use \$1 million of taxpayer money to open up an electric vehicle car shop.

Minister Murray called this absurd waste of taxpayers’ money “the first of its kind.” Mr. Speaker, will the minister tell us if this taxpayer-funded vanity project will also be the last of its kind?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I’m very happy to take the question from the member. This member, who has served in this Legislature for a number of years, would know that over the last number of years, there have been a number of initiatives that our government has brought forward with respect to supporting consumers who tell us, loudly and clearly, that they want to do their part in the very crucial fight against climate change.

We know, here in the province of Ontario, that roughly 35% of all greenhouse gas emissions flow as a result of activities within the transportation sector, and a large share of those come as a result of people who are driving vehicles that have traditional internal combustion engines.

That’s why, over the last number of years, we have brought forward a number of initiatives, including the Electric Vehicle Incentive Program, including support for the expansion of a significant build-out of a charging infrastructure network in every corner of the province of Ontario, because we want to help enable the kinds of choices that consumers tell us they want to make in order to do their part with respect to that fight against climate change.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: Speaker, this government refuses to fund life-changing treatments for rare-disease

patients while these ministers hand out 14-grand rebates to luxury electric Tesla owners and waste a million dollars on electric car lots.

In the real world, if someone wants to open a car lot, they use their own money. But when the Minister of Transportation and the Minister of the Environment unveiled Steve and Glen’s electric car shop yesterday, they used a million dollars of taxpayer money on their government-funded vanity project.

They can call it a discovery centre, an education centre; they can use whatever Liberal spin they choose. But when it comes down to it, the Liberals just wasted one million taxpayer dollars building an electric car dealership.

Mr. Speaker, will the ministers be working weekends at the car dealership to pay back this wasteful spending?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: To the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, Speaker.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I just want to point out that we are in a strategic partnership with all the major auto manufacturers—and global. Every single electric vehicle made in Ontario and sold in Ontario has been donated to be part of this. The car dealers know—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward–Hastings is warned. I could have warned him earlier, when he was heckling during his own member’s question.

Carry on.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Car dealers know that this centre is absolutely essential to advance EV sales and the development of them—every major auto manufacturer. But, Mr. Speaker, it does not surprise us over here that the party that voted—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Which one of your friends is profiting from this?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I’ll do it. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: —that the party that voted against every investment that we have made in the auto sector—that would have seen the collapse of our auto sector and loss of jobs—doesn’t support this.

The party that doesn’t support \$200 million, the biggest investment in EV mobility, to develop autonomous and electric vehicles here didn’t support that, and—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

New question.

NURSES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, my question is for the Premier.

Nurses are leaders in our health care system. And I want to welcome registered nurses who are here today from ONA.

Every day, nurses are on the front lines as first responders in our emergency rooms and throughout our health care system. Nurses see and experience trauma in

their workplaces each and every day, whether it's patients in life-threatening condition or the violence that puts health care workers themselves at risk.

New Democrats believe that all nurses in Ontario need to be covered by presumptive PTSD legislation. Why doesn't the Premier agree?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the leader of the third party for that excellent question.

Certainly, if there's an issue on which we have come a far way along in the past year, it's on PTSD coverage for our first responders.

Speaker, we all came together, as three parties in this House, to support a bill that was passed about a year ago, and each one of us had some input into that. Each one of us chose at that point in time which people should be covered under that bill. As we move on, obviously, questions are being asked—should some other people be included in that?

At this point in time, we should be proud of what we've done as a government, look to the future as what potentially we could do—because post-traumatic stress disorder amongst our first responders is something we've ignored for far too long.

We have a piece of legislation in place now. Legislation can always be improved upon. But we're in a leadership role in the province—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: During the committee process of the bill that the minister is talking about, we brought amendments to include nurses and others, but the Liberal government refused to include nurses in the legislation at that time. In fact, we could have legislation right now that does cover nurses, but the Liberals decided not to do that.

At a time when nurses are dealing with violence in the workplace, overcrowding in hospital hallways, increasing workloads and the physical and psychological demands that come from this government's cuts to hospitals, the Premier has chosen to turn her back on these nurses and deny them the WSIB coverage that every first responder needs and deserves.

Why is this Premier and her government refusing to do the right thing? Stand up for nurses and extend PTSD legislation to every nurse in Ontario.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I don't believe for a minute that anybody has turned their back on anybody in this process. This has been one of the best processes that this House has ever undertaken in taking an issue that was ignored—there were tragic outcomes to some of the things that were happening at that point in time. Our first responders, as a result of not being able to get presumptive coverage under WSIB, were choosing to take their own lives. We knew we needed to do something about that. We brought in Bill 109, I think it was, on PTSD—or 160. We've made a huge step forward.

We're always open to discussions, because we know nurses play such a huge, integral role in the provision of services to our society—

Ms. Cindy Forster: Five times the bill was brought forward by this party.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I think the member from Welland has to be warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: In a first responder role, nurses are covered in our corrections institutions.

We've come a long way. Perhaps we have more to do, but we should be proud of what we've done.

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Mr. Mike Colle: I have a question to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Mr. Minister, as you know, in recent months, our farmers and agri-food sector have come under vicious attack from our American neighbours. To many people in Ontario—we know full well that our agri-food industry is a \$36-billion industry. It employs 800,000 people. They create clean, safe, quality food in Ontario every day: our dairy farmers, our milk farmers. Yet we're being told that we have to abandon our successful supply management system.

1130

I know you're going to Wisconsin to meet with Great Lakes representatives to tell them about our strong agricultural system in Ontario, and that we're not going to be bullied by those—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank my colleague, the member from Eglinton—Lawrence, for the question this morning. I want to recognize him, as he was the unsung hero who helped to bring back French's ketchup production to the province of Ontario—

Interjections.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Mr. Speaker, I'll—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member sat down.

Supplementary?

Mr. Mike Colle: Anyway, when you are going on this trade mission to talk about the importance of our supply management system in Ontario—and the fact is that we have a surplus. In other words, the Americans get more out of trade with Ontario in agri-foods than what we get back, yet they want us to scrap this incredibly good system.

I ask you, Minister, what are you going to tell our American neighbours about our great agri-food industry, our great farmers and our great supply management system, which is second to none in the world when it comes to producing good, safe, quality food?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank the member for the supplementary. Basically, what we have here today is that the problem with milk production is in the United States. We have oversupply in places like Wisconsin, New York, Illinois and Pennsylvania.

I'll be going to Wisconsin next week to tell my colleagues down there that Ontario is not prepared to

cede one inch when it comes to our supply management system—the best system that has ever been designed for agriculture—fair price to the consumer, fair price to our producers in the province of Ontario; and we won't let the Americans attack a very successful system that contributes more than 22% to Ontario's agri-food sector and 23% of the sector's jobs.

I'm asking all members on all sides to stand up for Ontario's supply management system.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

New question.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Mr. Monte McNaughton: My question today is for the Premier. On May 24, the MPP from Northumberland–Quinte West will be in Thedford in the municipality of Lambton Shores in my riding for a public meeting about the government's plan to close more rural schools. Curiously, the invitation sent by the issues management team at the Ministry of Education specifies that “photography and video recording does not occur once the engagement session begins.” Heather Wright, publisher of the *Petrolia Independent*, calls it a “shameful excuse to limit press freedom” and a trampling “over the very basic freedoms of the press.”

The Premier's plans to fast-track the closure of more rural schools is not only an important issue in my riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, but all across the province. Will the Premier direct the Ministry of Education to lift the media blackout on this so-called public meeting, or will the government continue to close more rural schools under a veil of secrecy?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the Minister of Education is going to want to speak to the supplementary. But over my years as a parent, as a member of a school council, as a school trustee and as a community member, I've been to more education consultations than I can count. And what I know is that at those meetings, there are people who want to be on the public record and who want to speak out, and then there are people who want to talk about an issue, but actually don't want it to become a public discussion. What we need at a meeting like the one that is happening around the rural schools and community schools is, we need everybody to feel free to speak.

Of course the Minister of Education will always speak to the media. There will always be opportunities for the media to know what the discussion is about, but people need to be able to speak freely.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary? The member from Sarnia–Lambton.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Back to the Premier. In the email exchange between the spokesperson for the Ministry of Education and Heather Wright of the *Petrolia Independent*, the minister's spokesperson spins the need for the media blackout by citing “consent concerns of the

participants.” But how does the ministry already know there are consent concerns at a public meeting that is still a week away? So far, the only confirmed attendee is the member for Northumberland–Quinte West. Is it possible that it's your own government that is concerned about there being a video recording of this meeting?

Premier, there are already many concerns that this listening tour is much ado about nothing.

Premier, journalists have an important role to play in our democracy. Will you lift this blackout today so Ms. Wright and other journalists can do their job as professional journalists?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Education.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I want to thank the members for the question. It's a great opportunity to talk about these engagements and the fact that we're going into 10 communities across rural and northern Ontario to talk about how we improve education for students. That's what we're there to do, Mr. Speaker.

My colleagues who have been doing these consultations along with me—we've engaged with media. Media have attended as the sessions were beginning, and there's a process for the media to be involved in these consultations.

As the Premier has already said, we want to have a really robust conversation with parents, with students, with school boards, with municipalities and with everyone who is engaged in this very important dialogue around how we can improve our schools in rural and northern communities. We want to ensure that we create the space for them to do that and we have a process for connecting with the media that is quite open and transparent.

BIRTH CERTIFICATES

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services. Joshua Ferguson is a queer, non-binary person who has applied to change the sex designation on their birth certificate. Currently, in Ontario, one cannot amend their registration of birth to anything other than male or female categories. Ontarians should have the right to have their birth certificates accurately reflect the correct sex designation.

Will the minister issue an amended birth certificate to Joshua, and others like them, that correctly reflects their sex designation?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I want to thank the member from Parkdale–High Park for this very important question, because I have been following Joshua's story with great interest. Joshua presented at a ServiceOntario office recently.

I want to say, off the top, that our government values acceptance, respect and diversity. We're very committed to ensuring that all Ontarians are treated ethically, equitably and fairly, including the trans and non-binary community.

It's important to note that Ontario has already changed the way it displays information about a person's sex on

health cards and driver's licences, making it easier for people to have documents in line with their gender identity. We've also recently introduced a policy to help the trans and non-binary community to live according to their gender identity. There are new rules.

I'll talk more in the supplementary about what we're going to do on the birth certificate side.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Back to the minister. It's difficult to get a health card or a driver's licence if you can't get a birth certificate. Ontario passed Toby's Law in 2012, adding gender identity and gender expression to the Human Rights Code. Applying for a birth certificate with non-binary designation is entirely legal under Toby's Law, but sadly, Joshua may not be afforded rights.

This should not be an issue. Trans and non-binary rights are human rights. Why is the government breaking its own law?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Again, I want to thank the member for the question. Similar to the driver's licence and health card examples I mentioned, I'm very pleased to report to the Legislature that the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services is developing a gender-neutral option for Ontario birth certificates.

We know a birth certificate is a foundation for many forms of identification, and we need to ensure we get that right. We need to work with the federal government and other ministries, of course, on this.

1140

There was a recent consultation held with the trans and non-binary community on the development of an OPS-wide policy, and that is going to help inform our work on this birth certificate issue. I attended that session. I was deeply moved from the conversations I had with a number of attendees. It's my hope that we will target further consultations with the key partners I mentioned and get moving on this this summer.

NUCLEAR SAFETY

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Nuclear energy is a vital part of Ontario's energy mix and economy. Our province is at the centre of nuclear energy advancements and technology. That's something of which all the members of this House can be proud. Our nuclear facilities power more than half of Ontario and helped us get rid of dirty coal.

When it comes to nuclear energy, public safety is of very high importance. Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, can the minister update the House on the recently announced changes to the Provincial Nuclear Emergency Response Plan?

L'hon. Marie-France Lalonde: J'aimerais remercier la députée de Barrie pour cette excellente question.

My most important priority as minister is the safety and security of every Ontarian. We are updating our Provincial Nuclear Emergency Response Plan this year to ensure that it reflects the most current technologies and

facilities so that we can keep Ontarians safe in the highly unlikely event of a nuclear accident. We are taking lessons learned from past nuclear emergencies such as the Fukushima accident to ensure Ontario remains a global leader in nuclear safety.

The proposed changes to the PNERP are now available for public comments for the first time, and it is crucial that everyone—affected groups, and everyone—comments, including the general public. I encourage everyone interested to comment on this important issue.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to the minister for her response. I'm confident in Ontario's safety record and our emergency plan. I know that the minister has been working hard to ensure that this plan is fully up to date and reflects all best practices. Can the minister further speak to the Provincial Nuclear Emergency Response Plan?

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: Again, I want to say thank you to the member for her questions. I want to assure the House that we're fully prepared should the highly unlikely event of a nuclear emergency occur. Nuclear power has been meeting Ontario's energy needs safely for over 40 years, and our government is proud of that excellent and proven record. It helps us achieve our environmental goals and brings tens of thousands of jobs to Ontario.

Once we receive public input on our updated plan, our newly established expert advisory committee made up of top nuclear experts from around the world—national and international—will provide recommendations based on the feedback that we are receiving. I am proud that the public is participating in this process for the very first time, as well as everyone who's commenting.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Ms. Sylvia Jones: From the sunshine list, we saw the release of the salary and benefits of the CEO for the Central West CCAC. Her benefits for last year were almost \$20,000, up an incredible 1,000%. The Auditor General has already reported that 39 cents of every dollar spent at our CCACs go to administration, not front-line services.

How can the Premier justify this massive increase in the CEO's compensation?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The member opposite knows that we have put in place salary caps, a range of caps. She also knows that where there are situations where the comparators that have been used—and I don't know the details of this specific situation; I'm sure the President of the Treasury Board will be able to speak to it in the supplementary. But the member opposite knows that where the comparators that have been used are not reasonable, we will push back on that and ask for a review of those. But we have put those caps in place for a very good reason, and those ranges need to be respected.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: But clearly, the caps aren't working.

Back to the Premier: After the Auditor General's scathing report, the Minister of Health wrote a letter to all CCACs, telling them "not to enhance compensation or entitlements for non-union and management staff in any way, including wages, benefits, bonuses and termination provisions."

Clearly the Central West CCAC ignored the minister's direction. When will the Premier put an end to these unacceptable raises in executive compensation?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I can't comment on the particular individual. I can't comment on—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Dufferin—Caledon is warned.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I can't comment on that particular individual's salary and what has happened in the particular circumstance. What I can do is talk about the process that we are currently undergoing, which is that we've asked our broader public sector partners to look at comparators that are public sector, that are Canadian, that are comparable, that take into consideration the geography, the scope of responsibilities that people have, and to not pay more than the midpoint of reasonable comparators. I can tell you that that LHIN has not yet submitted—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

DEFERRED VOTES

FAIR HYDRO ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 POUR DES FRAIS D'ÉLECTRICITÉ ÉQUITABLES

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 132, An Act to enact the Ontario Fair Hydro Plan Act, 2017 and to make amendments to the Electricity Act, 1998 and the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 / Projet de loi 132, Loi édictant la Loi de 2017 sur le Plan ontarien pour des frais d'électricité équitables et modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur l'électricité et la Loi de 1998 sur la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1147 to 1152.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On May 15, 2017, Mr. Thibeault moved second reading of Bill 132.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Baker, Yvan
Ballard, Chris
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bradley, James J.
Chan, Michael
Chiarelli, Bob
Colle, Mike

Duguid, Brad
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Fraser, John
Hoggarth, Ann
Hunter, Mitzie
Jaczek, Helena
Kiwala, Sophie
Lalonde, Marie-France
Leal, Jeff

Milczyn, Peter Z.
Moridi, Reza
Murray, Glen R.
Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Naqvi, Yasir
Potts, Arthur
Qaadri, Shafiq
Rinaldi, Lou
Sandals, Liz

Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Des Rosiers, Nathalie
Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe
Dong, Han

MacCharles, Tracy
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Martins, Cristina
Matthews, Deborah
Mauro, Bill
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor
McMeekin, Ted

Sousa, Charles
Takhar, Harinder S.
Thibeault, Glenn
Vernile, Daiene
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Barrett, Toby
Bisson, Gilles
Brown, Patrick
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon
Clark, Steve
Coe, Lorne
Fedeli, Victor
Fife, Catherine
Forster, Cindy
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne

Gélinas, France
Gretzky, Lisa
Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Michael
Hatfield, Percy
Horwath, Andrea
Jones, Sylvia
MacLeod, Lisa
Martow, Gila
McNaughton, Monte
Miller, Paul
Munro, Julia
Nicholls, Rick

Oosterhoff, Sam
Pettapiece, Randy
Sattler, Peggy
Scott, Laurie
Smith, Todd
Taylor, Monique
Thompson, Lisa M.
Vanthof, John
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Yakabuski, John
Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 52; the nays are 38.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 17, 2017, the bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 CONTRE LA TRAITE DE PERSONNES

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 96, An Act to enact the Human Trafficking Awareness Day Act, 2017 and the Prevention of and Remedies for Human Trafficking Act, 2017 / Projet de loi 96, Loi édictant la Loi de 2017 sur la Journée de sensibilisation à la traite de personnes et la Loi de 2017 sur la prévention de la traite de personnes et les recours en la matière.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1155 to 1156.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On May 17, 2017, Ms. Naidoo-Harris moved third reading of Bill 96, An Act to enact the Human Trafficking Awareness Day Act, 2017 and the Prevention of and Remedies for Human Trafficking Act, 2017.

All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert

Forster, Cindy
Fraser, John
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne

Miller, Paul
Moridi, Reza
Munro, Julia
Murray, Glen R.

Baker, Yvan
Ballard, Chris
Barrett, Toby
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bisson, Gilles
Bradley, James J.
Brown, Patrick
Chan, Michael
Chiarelli, Bob
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon
Clark, Steve
Coe, Lorne
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Des Rosiers, Nathalie
Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe
Dong, Han
Duguid, Brad
Fedeli, Victor
Fife, Catherine
Flynn, Kevin Daniel

Gélinas, France
Gretzky, Lisa
Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Michael
Hatfield, Percy
Hoggarth, Ann
Horwath, Andrea
Hunter, Mitzie
Jaczek, Helena
Jones, Sylvia
Kiwała, Sophie
Lalonde, Marie-France
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
MacLeod, Lisa
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Martins, Cristina
Martow, Gila
Matthews, Deborah
Mauro, Bill
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor
McMeekin, Ted
McNaughton, Monte
Milczyn, Peter Z.

Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Naqvi, Yasir
Nicholls, Rick
Oosterhoff, Sam
Pettapiece, Randy
Potts, Arthur
Qaadri, Shafiq
Rinaldi, Lou
Sandals, Liz
Sattler, Peggy
Scott, Laurie
Smith, Todd
Sousa, Charles
Takhar, Harinder S.
Taylor, Monique
Thibeault, Glenn
Thompson, Lisa M.
Vanthof, John
Vernile, Daiene
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Yakabuski, John
Yurek, Jeff
Zimmer, David

Clark, Steve
Coe, Lorne
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Des Rosiers, Nathalie
Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe
Dong, Han
Duguid, Brad
Fedeli, Victor
Fife, Catherine
Flynn, Kevin Daniel

Lalonde, Marie-France
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
MacLeod, Lisa
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Martins, Cristina
Martow, Gila
Matthews, Deborah
Mauro, Bill
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor
McMeekin, Ted
Milczyn, Peter Z.
Miller, Paul
Moridi, Reza

Sousa, Charles
Takhar, Harinder S.
Taylor, Monique
Thibeault, Glenn
Thompson, Lisa M.
Vanthof, John
Vernile, Daiene
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Yakabuski, John
Yurek, Jeff
Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 90; the nays are 0.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

RENTAL FAIRNESS ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 SUR L'ÉQUITÉ EN LOCATION IMMOBILIÈRE

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 124, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 / Projet de loi 124, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1159 to 1200.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Earlier today, Mr. Naqvi moved third reading of Bill 124, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Amott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Baker, Yvan
Ballard, Chris
Barrett, Toby
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bisson, Gilles
Bradley, James J.
Brown, Patrick
Chan, Michael
Chiarelli, Bob
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon

Forster, Cindy
Fraser, John
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne
Gélinas, France
Gretzky, Lisa
Hardeman, Ernie
Hatfield, Percy
Hoggarth, Ann
Horwath, Andrea
Hunter, Mitzie
Jaczek, Helena
Jones, Sylvia
Kiwała, Sophie

Munro, Julia
Murray, Glen R.
Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Naqvi, Yasir
Nicholls, Rick
Oosterhoff, Sam
Pettapiece, Randy
Potts, Arthur
Qaadri, Shafiq
Rinaldi, Lou
Sandals, Liz
Sattler, Peggy
Scott, Laurie
Smith, Todd

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 88; the nays are 0.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1202 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm very pleased to welcome to the House Dr. Stephen Vander Klippe. He is a doctor who has travelled from Wingham today to have his voice heard, and it's awesome that he's here.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

AGE-FRIENDLY WHITBY

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to speak about the age-friendly community program in the town of Whitby. As they age, town of Whitby residents are seeking opportunities to stay active in their communities and in the local economy. They're committed, long-term residents contributing their time, energy and wealth of experience to local projects and community organizations.

To recognize this contribution, I'm very pleased to highlight and support the launch of the town of Whitby's age-friendly community plan on June 1. Clearly, a community that works for seniors works for everyone.

Ideally, all members of the community should be engaged in exploring age-friendly policies, as many features that benefit seniors can also benefit other groups in our communities. The time is right to move these age-friendly ideas and practices out into the broader community. It's good for people and it's good for business.

My best wishes to the town of Whitby's staff and council for a successful launch of Whitby's age-friendly community plan.

SPEAKER'S WHISKY OF THE YEAR

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I want to thank you, Speaker, for coming up with what I think is a great idea. Now, we in this House all know you've never taken a drink in your life. I guess the old-fashioned term for that would be that you are a teetotaler—not that there's anything wrong with that.

Nine days ago, you hosted a whisky-tasting competition. You are introducing a Speaker's choice of whisky to the legislative dining room. You've done something similar before. You've had us select the Ontario wines that are served, both red and white, and the craft beers that are available for the year of the competition. Now we'll have a whisky that is, shall I say, born and bred here in Ontario, distilled and bottled from Ontario grains.

There were many fine brands from which to choose. I know; I sampled them all. It was a tough choice. But, Speaker, as you know, the whisky that was chosen, the Speaker's whisky that will be featured here in Queen's Park as chosen by the members from all across Ontario is—drum roll, please—from the riding of Windsor—Tecumseh, none other than J.P. Wiser's Legacy.

A shout-out to Spirits Canada's Jan Westcott and Michael Barrington for walking us through the finer points of sampling those tiny, little portions.

Speaker, thank you for doing this, for promoting Ontario's distilled spirits. We've been making whisky—good whisky, great whisky—in Windsor—Tecumseh since 1858, nearly 160 years. Now, thanks to you, one of our great brands—and we do have many—will be the featured whisky of the year here at the Ontario Legislature.

On behalf of all of my constituents in Windsor—Tecumseh, thank you for doing this—and congratulations again to J.P. Wiser's Legacy brand, the Speaker's whisky of the year.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): By way of explanation: The fact that he mentioned something about me, I let him go over time.

GRADUATION RATES

Ms. Harinder Malhi: As a previous school board trustee, I understand the importance of Ontario's unprecedented investments in education and I understand that we have pushed the high school graduation rates to a historic new high, as many more students than ever before are obtaining a high school diploma and gaining the skills and experience that are required for the jobs of tomorrow.

The 2017 budget includes an additional investment of \$6.4 billion over three years in Ontario's education system, which reflects the government's commitment to help learners reach their full potential by supporting them right from full-day kindergarten through to post-secondary education and beyond.

In 2016, the five-year graduation rate province-wide increased to 86.5%, up more than 18 percentage points compared to 2004's rate of 68%. The number of students

graduating in four years continues to grow and is now 79.6%, an increase of more than 23 percentage points since 2004.

In the region of Peel, we also had great graduation rates. At the Peel District School Board, the four-year graduation rate was 81.3%, with a five-year graduation of 87.7%.

At Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, the graduation rates were a four-year graduation rate of 88.6% and a five-year graduation rate of 92.8%.

We are proud of all the work we've put into education. I know that this is one of the reasons I wanted to be here in the Legislature, because of our government's commitment to education right from early years to post-secondary.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Inadequate funding and lack of a real plan is hurting long-term care across Ontario, but Niagara region has been hit particularly hard because of our large and growing senior population. Nearly one in five Niagara residents is 65 years of age and deserve to know that they will be able to receive timely and prompt care if and when they need it.

Right now, the provincial wait-list for long-term-care facilities stands at over 27,000 individuals; 4,858 are on waiting lists in the Niagara region alone. On average, only 96 beds become available each month. That means that even if no one else puts themselves on our local wait-lists, it would take almost four years for the current list to be cleared.

Looking at the direction we're heading in, I may have to put my name on a list soon just to get in.

The problem is compounded by staff-to-resident ratios that are too low. I know that the Minister of Health has been made aware of this by concerned municipal representatives, who have requested enhanced funding for long-term-care facilities and an increase in the number of personal support workers.

The government has literally squandered billions in a long litany of scandal and waste. Why won't it provide the compassionate care for our seniors who need and deserve it? They contributed to the betterment of our communities for a lifetime, and now we in this House have the duty to look after them. I hope that the government will take action on long-term care soon.

SAVIO WONG

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's rare that we get the opportunity to thank those teachers in our community for decades of service, but today I get the chance to thank Savio Wong, who has announced his retirement from Waterloo-Oxford District Secondary School, where he has created a sense of community as the head librarian. He is a well-known and respected teacher in the region, a world traveller and a cancer survivor.

Savio has received awards for excellence in teaching, most recently the David Brohman Award in 2016, but the greatest praise he has received is from his students.

Ash Baer, a recent graduate, says, "Mr. Wong is the heart of Waterloo-Oxford. He takes being a high school librarian to the next level by creating a space that allows people to connect, be themselves and feel valued. He teaches students to feel pride in their school community and imagine what their own impact will be after graduation. Mr. Wong was diagnosed with cancer in 2010 and our W-O community rallied around him with a 'Stay Strong, Stay Wong' theme at the Relay for Life that year. It's inspiring to see him enjoying life to the fullest."

Former W-O principal Ed Doadt shared, "Savio is one of the finest educators I have had the opportunity to work with. He's always there for people, students, staff and graduates. A vast source of wisdom and encouragement for all."

He has been a teacher for 32 years and he has made a difference in the lives of students. We wish him well in the next chapter and we look forward to square dancing at his retirement party on June 17.

BLADDER CANCER

Mr. John Fraser: Bladder Cancer Canada is celebrating its second annual bladder cancer awareness campaign throughout the month of May. It's an opportunity to thank the dedicated volunteer team across the country and bring public attention to this disease.

In the gallery today we have David Guttman, one of the founders of Bladder Cancer Canada, as well as Paul Unterman. Both of them are bladder cancer survivors.

There are over 80,000 Canadians living with bladder cancer today. Close to 9,000 patients will be diagnosed with this form of cancer this year. Bladder cancer is the fifth most prevalent cancer in Canada: fourth for men and 12th for women.

Bladder Cancer Canada is dedicated to providing the highest-quality patient care, raising public awareness of the disease and advancing life-saving research.

Bladder Cancer Canada hosts annual awareness walks across the country in September. To get involved, visit their website, bladdercancer.ca, and look for their awareness hashtag, #yellowhelps, on Twitter.

On behalf of the caucus, I want to thank Bladder Cancer Canada for doing the work they're doing to find a cure for this disease.

1310

ELMIRA SUGAR KINGS

Mr. Michael Harris: I stand to congratulate the newly crowned Ontario Junior B hockey champs, the Elmira Sugar Kings.

While the ice-covered road to the Sutherland Cup was a long one, after earning themselves a wild card playoff berth, the Elmira Sugar Kings' determination and hard work was rewarded earlier this month in game five of a hard-fought series versus London. Even that was a nail-biter, as London closed to within one goal in the third before the Kings finally pulled away, netting two more from Mitch Hoelscher and Jake Brown while goalie

Jonathan Reinhart stood on his head for a 4-1 final tally to seal the deal and hoist the cup.

Congratulations, as well, to the London Nationals for their hard work and effort over the season that saw them fall just short.

The Sugar Kings' victory is a fitting end to a stellar and final year at the helm for head coach Ty Canal, who, along with celebrating the Sutherland Cup honours, announced that he is stepping down to spend time with his wife and children. We wish him, of course, all the best.

I want to congratulate the fans, the community and the volunteers throughout the season who put time and effort into every game: every home game, got on the bus and travelled to away games to help cheer on their local team. I want to, of course, thank all of the players, coaches and staff of the Elmira Sugar Kings for a banner championship year, earning their crown as the best Junior B hockey team in Ontario and Sutherland Cup winners.

Congratulations to the Elmira Sugar Kings.

SEAN AND MICHAEL SULLIVAN

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I would like to ask you a question: What would you do if you saw a child drowning? Well, thanks to the quick action of Sean and Michael Sullivan of Waterloo, a child was rescued. This week, the Sullivans were recognized by our Waterloo regional police with bravery awards.

Here's what happened. A group of my volunteers were gathered at Victoria Park for a picnic. Sean is my riding association president. After a few hours, it began drizzling, so we were starting to pack up when Michael, who was 10 at the time, alerted us to a child, just a few metres away, struggling in the park lake. The boy was slipping under water, then bobbing back up again and then back under. Now keep in mind, all of this was happening in a matter of seconds.

I shouted out, "He's drowning." That's when Sean took action by jumping into the lake and grabbing the child. Meantime, I dialled 911 on my cellphone, and former MPP John Milloy, who was also there at the picnic, reached in over the rocky embankment to pull out the boy.

We wrapped the boy in a towel and waited for emergency crews to arrive. The young boy's family then appeared. They're newcomers to Canada, and they were staying at Reception House. This is a refugee transition home that is across the street. The mom was very distraught, and through broken English, we managed to understand that the boy is autistic and sometimes he wanders off.

Speaker, I am so proud of both Sean and Michael for their quick action that saved the day. They both very much deserve this award for their heroic actions.

E. MAYHEW AND SON

Mr. Monte McNaughton: At a time in our retail economy of large box stores and uncertain business

conditions due to rising costs and the change in rural and small-town demographics, a small business located in Glencoe has been serving its customers for well over 100 years.

In 1910, E. Mayhew and Son opened on Main Street as a retailer of ladies' fashions, menswear and children's clothing. Over the years, the store has been visited by a loyal clientele from miles around.

Standing across the street from the historic and restored Grand Trunk Railway Station, Mayhew's store maintains its characteristic late-Victorian façade. Inside, there are displays of memorabilia from generations of business.

Beneath this show of history, Mayhew's is an up-to-date business. They have been both the recipient of a Better Business award in 2005 and Communities in Bloom recognition.

The current owner, Allan Mayhew, represents the fourth generation of his family to direct this successful operation. He has recently announced the closing of this landmark business as he and his wife, Linda, wish to retire.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize one of the notable and successful family businesses in Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, since 1910, E. Mayhew and Son.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Education on a point of order.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Speaker, this morning, I introduced Khalil Heron and his mother, Farah Heron, who were here to join me for lunch. I said that Khalil was a student of Joseph Brant Public School. However, he is a grade 8 student at William G. Miller Junior Public School. I just want to welcome them here. They are on their tour of Queen's Park.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Resign.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm nice and calm.

SPEAKER'S COMMENTS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Earlier this morning, before question period, I made a mistake, and I wish to—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Resign.

Laughter.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I wish to acknowledge the member from Leeds-Grenville when he indicated concern on a point of order, after I made my ruling, that I used words that I should not have used. After review, I realized that the member did make a statement that he accepted the ruling. I made other comments that I should not have made, and I apologize to the member from Leeds-Grenville.

However, I will then say that his warning stands, because it was no less than five times where I asked the member to be seated.

Mr. Steve Clark: But I didn't hear that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's too bad.

I apologize to the member from Leeds-Grenville.

ESTIMATES

Hon. Liz Sandals: I have a message from the Honourable George R. Strathy, the Administrator of the province of Ontario, signed by his own hand.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Administrator of the province of Ontario transmits estimates of certain sums required for the services of the province for the year ending March 31, 2018, and recommends them to the Legislative Assembly. Toronto, May 15, 2017.

VISITOR

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I wish to acknowledge that in the members' gallery today we have Stephen Vander Klippe, who was in my brother's bridal party. It's great to have him here with the physicians who are concerned about conscience protection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): He's very special. He got introduced twice. That's good.

I thank all members for their comments.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Valerie Quioc Lim): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 87, An Act to implement health measures and measures relating to seniors by enacting, amending or repealing various statutes / *Projet de loi 87, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre des mesures concernant la santé et les personnes âgées par l'édiction, la modification ou l'abrogation de diverses lois.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the report be received and accepted? Do we agree? Agreed. Carried.

Report adopted.

MOTIONS

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Hon. Laura Albanese: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the travel of certain committees.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Minister.

Hon. Laura Albanese: I move that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be authorized to attend the annual conference of the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees, and the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly be authorized to attend the annual general meeting of the National Conference of State Legislatures.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister moves that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be authorized to attend the annual conference of the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees, and the Standing Committee on Legislative Assembly be authorized to attend the annual meeting of the National Conference of State Legislatures. Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. Laura Albanese: I move that, pursuant to standing order 6(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 18, 2017, for the purpose of considering government business.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister moves government notice of motion number 17. Do we agree? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1320 to 1325.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Ms. Albanese has moved government notice of motion 17.

All in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Bailey, Robert
Baker, Yvan
Ballard, Chris
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bradley, James J.
Chan, Michael
Chiarelli, Bob
Clark, Steve
Coe, Lorne
Colle, Mike
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Des Rosiers, Nathalie
Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe

Dong, Han
Duguid, Brad
Fedeli, Victor
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Fraser, John
Hoggarth, Ann
Hunter, Mitzie
Jaczek, Helena
Jones, Sylvia
Kiwala, Sophie
Lalonde, Marie-France
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Martins, Cristina
Martow, Gila
McMahon, Eleanor
McNaughton, Monte

Milczyn, Peter Z.
Murray, Glen R.
Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Naqvi, Yasir
Oosterhoff, Sam
Qaadri, Shafiq
Rinaldi, Lou
Sandals, Liz
Scott, Laurie
Sousa, Charles
Thompson, Lisa M.
Vernile, Daiane
Walker, Bill
Wong, Soo
Yakabuski, John
Yurek, Jeff
Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Bisson, Gilles
DiNovo, Cheri

Fife, Catherine
Forster, Cindy

Miller, Paul
Vanthof, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 55; the nays are 6.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

VISITORS

Mr. Granville Anderson: I'd like to welcome some special guests who are here with us today: Glenn Thorpe, who is vice-chair of the Young Professionals Network; Hélène Asselbergs, chief of staff to the president of Durham College; as well as some present and former students from Durham College, and they are Brittany Charlton, Gregory Barnes and Rachel Enright. Welcome to Queen's Park.

PETITIONS

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mrs. Gila Martow: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the North York General Hospital (NYGH) recently announced its intention to close the NYGH Branson Ambulatory Care Centre as of June 1, 2017, and terminate all outpatient services at the NYGH Branson site as of June 1, 2019; and

"Whereas, located on Finch Avenue and west of Bathurst Street in north Toronto, the Branson site serves approximately 90,000 patients a year; and

"Whereas it provides urgent and efficient care for non-threatening emergencies; and

"Whereas it also features the total joint assessment care, orthopaedic treatment centre, the Wright prostate centre, Cataract High Volume Centre, Diabetes Education Centre, child and adolescent eating disorders program, addiction program, Assertive Community Treatment Team, child and adolescent outpatient mental health, Ontario breast screening program, and a point of care; and

"Whereas Branson is known for quality service to many of the area's seniors and new Canadians; and

"Whereas closure of the Branson site would be detrimental to the local community at large and compound on the volume and wait times at neighbouring hospitals located a fair distance away;

"Therefore we, the undersigned," petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

They call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario "to refrain from shutting down the Branson site and invest in future care of this local north Toronto community."

I affix my signature and give it to page Rada.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Cindy Forster: "Nurses Know—Petition for Better Care."

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas providing high-quality, universal, public health care is crucial for a fair and thriving Ontario; and

"Whereas years of underfunding have resulted in cuts to registered nurses (RNs) and hurt patient care; and

1330

"Whereas, in 2015 alone, Ontario lost more than 1.5 million hours of RN care due to cuts; and

"Whereas procedures are being off-loaded into private clinics not subject to hospital legislation; and

"Whereas funded services are being cut from hospitals and are not being provided in the community; and

"Whereas cutting skilled care means patients suffer more complications, readmissions and death;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Implement a moratorium on RN cuts;

"Commit to restoring hospital base operating funding to at least cover the costs of inflation and population growth;

"Create a fully-funded multi-year health human resources plan to bring Ontario's ratio of registered nurses to population up to the national average;

"Ensure hospitals have enough resources to continue providing safe, quality and integrated care for clinical procedures and stop plans for moving such procedures into private, unaccountable clinics."

I support this petition. I will sign it and send it with page Iman.

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I have a petition that's addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly:

"Update Ontario Fluoridation Legislation.

"Whereas community water fluoridation is a safe, effective and scientifically proven means of preventing dental decay, and is a public health measure endorsed by more than 90 national and international health organizations; and

"Whereas recent experience in such Canadian cities as Dorval, Calgary and Windsor that have removed fluoride from drinking water has shown a dramatic increase in dental decay; and

"Whereas the continued use of fluoride in community drinking water is at risk in Ontario cities representing more than 10% of Ontario's population, including the region of Peel; and

"Whereas the Ontario Legislature has twice voted unanimously in favour of the benefits of community water fluoridation, and the Ontario Ministries of Health and Long-Term Care and Municipal Affairs and Housing urge support for amending the Health Protection and Promotion Act and other applicable legislation to ensure community water fluoridation is mandatory and to remove provisions allowing Ontario municipalities to cease drinking water fluoridation, or fail to start drinking water fluoridation, from the Ontario Municipal Act;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Premier of Ontario direct the Ministries of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Health and Long-Term Care to introduce legislation amending the Health Protection and Promotion Act and make changes to other applicable legislation and regulations to make the fluoridation of municipal drinking water mandatory in all municipal water systems across the province of Ontario."

I agree with this petition, will affix my name and send it to the table with page Eesha.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas conscience rights for health care providers are not currently" provided for and "protected in Ontario;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario" to "pass legislation providing robust conscience protection for Ontario's health care providers, for medical aid in dying."

I agree with this petition. I'll affix my signature and send it to the table with Gabriel.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further petitions? I recognize the member from Kitchener Centre.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Catherine Fife: "Nurses Know—Petition for Better Care.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas providing high-quality, universal, public health care is crucial for a fair and thriving Ontario; and

"Whereas years of underfunding have resulted in cuts to registered nurses ... and hurt patient care; and

"Whereas, in 2015 alone, Ontario lost more than 1.5 million hours of RN care due to cuts; and

"Whereas procedures are being off-loaded into private clinics not subject to hospital legislation...;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Implement a moratorium on RN cuts;

"Commit to restoring hospital base operating funding to at least cover the costs of inflation and population growth;

"Create a fully-funded multi-year health human resources plan to bring Ontario's ratio of registered nurses to population up to the national average;

"Ensure hospitals have enough resources to continue providing safe, quality and integrated care for clinical procedures and stop plans for moving such procedures into private, unaccountable clinics."

I fully support this petition, will sign it and give it to page Jeremi.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I apologize. The member was Kitchener-Waterloo.

GO TRANSIT

Mr. Han Dong: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Cambridge, Ontario, is a municipality of over 125,000 people, many of whom commute into the greater Toronto area daily;

"Whereas the current commuting options available for travel between the Waterloo region and the GTA are inefficient and time-consuming, as well as environmentally damaging;

"Whereas the residents of Cambridge and the Waterloo region believe that they would be well-served by commuter rail transit that connects the region to the Milton line, and that this infrastructure would have positive, tangible economic benefits to the province of Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Direct crown agency Metrolinx to commission a feasibility study into building a rail line that connects the city of Cambridge to the GO train station in Milton, and to complete this study in a timely manner and communicate the results to the municipal government of Cambridge."

I support this petition. I will sign it and give it to page Eesha.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Bill C-14, the federal legislation which legalized medical assistance in dying (MAID) in Canada explicitly affirms it is not intended to compel anyone to act against their deeply held beliefs; and

"Whereas the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario has adopted the effective-referral protocol for MAID, which may compel health care professionals to act contrary to their deeply held beliefs; and

"Whereas the effective-referral protocol for MAID is globally unprecedented; and

"Whereas there are viable alternatives for the provision of effective access to MAID that would allow all health care professionals to continue to practise with ethical integrity; and

"Whereas this effective-referral-protocol policy may compel health care professionals to make a dehumanizing choice between their profession and their faith, conscience or commitment to the Hippocratic oath;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately take action to protect the rights of Ontario citizens by eliminating the effective-referral protocol for medical assistance in dying, upholding the conscience rights of health care professionals."

I totally support this petition and will send it down with the page.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: "Nurses Know—Petition for Better Care.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas providing high-quality, universal, public health care is crucial for a fair and thriving Ontario; and

"Whereas years of underfunding have resulted in cuts to registered nurses (RNs) and hurt patient care; and

"Whereas, in 2015 alone, Ontario lost more than 1.5 million hours of RN care due to cuts; and

"Whereas procedures are being off-loaded into private clinics not subject to hospital legislation; and

"Whereas funded services are being cut from hospitals and are not being provided in the community; and

"Whereas cutting skilled care means patients suffer more complications, readmissions and death;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Implement a moratorium on RN cuts;

"Commit to restoring hospital base operating funding to at least cover the costs of inflation and population growth;

"Create a fully-funded multi-year health human resources plan to bring Ontario's ratio of registered nurses to population up to the national average;

"Ensure hospitals have enough resources to continue providing safe, quality and integrated care for clinical procedures and stop plans for moving such procedures into private, unaccountable clinics."

I couldn't agree more. I'm going to sign this and give it to Eesha to be delivered to the table.

HYDRO RATES

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas electricity prices have increased and in too many cases become unaffordable for Ontarians;

"Whereas Ontario is a prosperous province and people should never have to choose between hydro and other daily necessities;

"Whereas people want to know that hydro rate relief is on the way; that relief will go to everyone; and that relief will be lasting because it is built on significant change;

"Whereas the Ontario fair hydro plan would reduce hydro bills for residential consumers, small businesses and farms by an average of 25% as part of a significant system restructuring, with increases held to the rate of inflation for the next four years;

"Whereas the Ontario fair hydro plan would provide people with low incomes and those living in rural communities with even greater reductions to their electricity bills;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Support the Ontario fair hydro plan and provide relief for Ontario electricity consumers as quickly as possible;

"Continue working to ensure clean, reliable and affordable electricity is available for all Ontarians."

I agree with this petition. I put my name to it and will give it to Hayden.

1340

RAIL SERVICE

Mr. Victor Fedeli: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas both the Canadian government and the Ontario government need a transportation policy, plan and investment that include transporting both passengers and freight by rail; and

"Whereas this is essential for our competitiveness in the world economy, for reducing carbon emissions and for socio-economic connectivity; and

"Whereas we must stop the abandonment of rail and support the safest, more efficient and least polluting mode of transportation: trains; and

"Whereas without rail as part of northern Ontario's transportation system, most of our communities are not sustainable;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario provide reliable, safe, all-season, accessible and affordable passenger train service throughout northern Ontario connected to Toronto and Ottawa."

I appreciate this. I agree with this petition, sign it and give it to page Gurjaap.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Cindy Forster: The petition is "Ontario is Not For Sale."

"Whereas the Liberal government of Ontario is currently reviewing proposals to sell off a significant amount of our shared public assets such as Ontario Power Generation (OPG), Hydro One, and the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO); and

"Whereas our shared public assets provide more affordable hydro, develop environmentally friendly energy, create thousands of good Ontario jobs, and are accountable to all Ontarians; and

"Whereas our shared public assets put money in the public bank ... so we can invest in hospitals, roads and schools; and

"Whereas this Liberal government is more interested in helping out wealthy shareholders and investors than they are in the hard-working Ontarians who are building this province; and

"Whereas Ontario is stronger when there is shared prosperity;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"Stop the selling-off of our shared public assets. Keep our public assets in public hands."

I support this petition. I will sign it and send it with Kenna.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Han Dong: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas electricity prices have increased and in too many cases become unaffordable for Ontarians;

"Whereas Ontario is a prosperous province and people should never have to choose between hydro and other daily necessities;

"Whereas people want to know that hydro rate relief is on the way; that relief will go to everyone; and that relief will be lasting because it is built on significant change;

"Whereas the Ontario fair hydro plan would reduce hydro bills for residential consumers, small businesses and farms by an average of 25% as part of a significant system restructuring, with increases held to the rate of inflation for the next four years;

"Whereas the Ontario fair hydro plan would provide people with low incomes and those living in rural communities with even greater reductions to their electricity bills;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Support the Ontario fair hydro plan and provide relief for Ontario electricity consumers as quickly as possible;

"Continue working to ensure clean, reliable and affordable electricity is available for all Ontarians."

I support this petition. I will sign it and give it to page Peter.

Mr. John Fraser: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I recognize the member from Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: Speaker, this being May 18, I must take the time to wish my wife, my partner and my best friend, Linda, a happy birthday. Many thanks for enduring 40 years with me. Happy birthday. Love you.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. The time allocated for petitions has expired.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

REGULATED HEALTH PROFESSIONS

AMENDMENT ACT

(FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE IN HEALTH CARE), 2017

LOI DE 2017 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES PROFESSIONS DE LA SANTÉ RÉGLEMENTÉES (LIBERTÉ DE CONSCIENCE EN MATIÈRE DE SOINS DE SANTÉ)

Mr. Yurek moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 129, An Act to amend the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 with respect to medical assistance in dying / Projet de loi 129, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1991

sur les professions de la santé réglementées en ce qui concerne l'aide médicale à mourir.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I want to thank everyone who will be participating in the debate today and, of course, the many health care professionals and religious leaders that have joined us today.

Bill 129, which we are debating today, was created to fill a gap that was created in our health care system when the Liberal government failed to support amendments in Bill 84 which would have ensured protection of conscience rights for health care professionals with regard to medical assistance in dying.

I must say, through the entire debate of Bill 84 and leading up to the debate today, that medical assistance in dying is not an easy topic to have a discussion about. Many people don't like thinking about that topic in particular, and the viewpoints of those who either support or don't support medical assistance in dying are quite distant between one and the other. Some people believe that everyone should have access to medical assistance in dying. Some people believe that health care professionals should be forced to participate in medical assistance in dying. But others see it the other way.

Whether you believe it to be morally acceptable or not, somewhere within each one of us, each one of us here and around our province has taken a stand on the issue. Some have used religion to help make their decisions; others have based it on their own moral code, what they believe inside themselves.

You know what? It doesn't matter where you stand on the issue, but that makes our country great, makes our province an amazing place to live: that each one of us has the freedom and the ability to make those types of decisions for ourselves, to believe what we want, to express ourselves however we want. In fact, we believe in this way of life so much that in times of need and injustice, we will send our own military to nations around the world to ensure those other countries have the same rights and freedoms we enjoy as Canadians.

In Bill C-14, the federal government's preamble stated that the government will develop non-legislative measures that would "respect the personal convictions of health care providers." The intention of Bill C-14 was not to intrude upon health care providers' conscience rights and beliefs. However, we've encountered a problem, and it shows that preambles have no standing in law.

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario created an effective-referral policy. The effective-referral policy is a policy which forces the doctor to participate directly or indirectly in medical assistance in dying. If the doctors do not provide this effective referral, they would face disciplinary action from the college, which either would be fines, suspensions or, eventually, if they continue to abide by their conscience, removal from practice of being a doctor.

Doctors believe that this effective-referral policy created by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario crosses their beliefs, their own internal moral code and the ethical standards upon which they guide their practice. It's those standards, those ethical beliefs, the love they have for patients and the dedication they have for patients that we, as Ontarians, respect. It's what we believe in. This is why we give them our own lives to deal with when we go in times of need. When we're sick, when we're ill, when we're aching, when we're in pain, we rely upon our doctors to treat us. We rely on their internal code, their internal ethics, to treat us to wellness.

Doctors want to support their patients. Not one doctor I've spoken to, not one health care professional I've spoken to during this whole process, would ever abandon their patients. They are willing to discuss medical assistance in dying and palliative care. It's been brought up numerous times that palliative care needs a lot of work in this province, but they would talk to them about their options, what's available out there. They would support their patients on their decisions. However, they do not want to be part of the process. It goes against their beliefs and, as I said earlier, their ethical code.

Doctors, through the effective referral—whether the college believes it's participating or not, the doctor's billing number, which we heard through committee, sticks with that patient through the whole process. Even in the technical workings of OHIP, the doctor is part of the process.

1350

Madam Speaker, Ontario is the only jurisdiction in the world with this type of policy that disciplines their health care providers for choosing not to participate in medical assistance in dying. Oregon, Alberta, BC, Europe—all ensure conscience protection. Yesterday, Manitoba introduced legislation to protect the conscience rights of health care providers in that province. CPSO has stated that they do not consider effective referral an infringement of conscience rights. They don't consider effective referral as participating in medical assistance in dying. In other words, the College of Physicians and Surgeons is telling doctors what to think and what to believe, and that is wrong.

CPSO has been wrong on other items, such as their failure to protect victims of sexual abuse. They are wrong on this issue as well. CPSO has created a policy that runs counter to the federal direction on Bill C-14, and it needs a remedy and it needs to be fixed.

Bill 84 was the place to do that. Bill 84 was the opportunity for all parties to work together to fix that problem. However, the Liberal government decided, "No, we don't want to participate in that." In fact, this Liberal government is intervening in supporting the CPSO, the independent body responsible for regulating the medical profession, in regard to a lawsuit launched by five Christian doctors who argue that the college's Professional Obligations and Human Rights policy violates the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It's obvious the leaders of this government do not believe in freedoms

and rights of health care professionals. I'm hoping today that the rest of the party—the backbenchers, the parliamentary assistants, those who usually don't get a voice with this government—are being allowed to speak up for the rights of health care professionals in this province. This government, through bits and pieces of legislation, is slowly stripping the rights and freedoms of the people of this province with each and every bill that is passed through this Legislature.

Some may raise the issue that the vulnerable would be affected if doctors' conscience protection was enabled. That is where the self-referral model is coming in. This government is committed to creating a model similar to Alberta's, which they created over a year ago, that would allow people to self-refer through the government system in order to access medical assistance in dying. People don't always have access to a doctor, but the vulnerable have the same access to a doctor as they will for this self-referral system. If you can pick up the phone to call your doctor, you can pick up the phone to get a referral. You can contact your CCAC. You may be in a long-term-care home. There may be a social worker you can talk to. There are more avenues to access the self-referral system than relying on getting access through your family doctor, especially in rural and northern Ontario, where doctors are few and far between, Madam Speaker.

Alberta has the self-referral model, but they also protect the conscience rights of health care providers, and access to medical assistance in dying is greater in that province than in Ontario. If we can get a model like Alberta and ensure conscience protection, then we'll be able to have access to medical assistance in dying.

The voices of people have been loud and clear over the years. I'm going to read a couple of quotes.

"As a Canadian physician who has spent my career in east Africa advocating for the basic human rights of pregnant women and their children, I'm extremely saddened by the current political environment in Ontario where physicians and health care workers are denied their basic human right, the right to not violate their conscience in the care of patients/clients. I can hardly envision a government and college of physicians who insist that despite self-referral and access to medical assistance in dying, health workers who do not refer these patients on are violating professional rules of conduct. This is not a healthy environment for anyone. It is not the Canada that we all love and respect. Please do the right thing for the future of the health of the Ontario medical system." That's Dr. Jean Chamberlain, Member of the Order of Canada, executive director of Save the Mothers, and associate professor, McMaster University.

I took some excerpts from an article by Martin Regg Cohn, Toronto Star:

"I feel enormous empathy for physicians who entered the medical profession to save lives, not to take them, nor even facilitate the taking of them. Doctors must balance their ethical obligations to patients against matters of personal conscience.

"No one can imagine coercing doctors to perform" medical assistance in dying, "any more than one can

fathom requiring them to perform an abortion if they believe it, rightly or wrongly, to be taking a human life. The more difficult question is whether a doctor should be required to refer a patient to another physician who will carry out the patient's wish... To abruptly demand that a doctor now has to do the precise opposite of what he believes he was trained to do crosses a line."

Patients Canada: "Access must not depend on a physician who is unwilling to have a role in physician-assisted death for whatever reason. Forcing a doctor to do what goes against their belief system, including referring, will not work for the patient. Therefore, in this case we ask for a process that is independent, whereby patients can be immediately directed to a practitioner within easy reach and willing to help ensure a dignified end to life at an opportunity of the patient's choosing."

The Canadian Medical Association and the Ontario Medical Association support conscience rights. In fact, there was a recent survey done of some OMA members, and 91% support conscience rights protection.

Madam Speaker, this bill deals specifically with medical assistance in dying. Freedom of conscience and religious belief is paramount for a free country. Let's not let a regulatory body be allowed to erode the freedom of this country. Health care providers deserve the same protection of rights as every other Canadian. I implore all MPPs to vote their conscience. Vote for the constituents. Have a free vote in this Legislature. Let's vote for freedom and individual rights. Please support my bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I want to talk about somebody I loved a lot, who is no longer with us as, unfortunately, she died of stage 4 cancer, originally from the breast and it ended up in her bone, and that's my sister, Louise.

When she found out she had cancer, we were all hoping, like everybody, that Louise would overcome and be able to survive, as many people do, if you catch it early enough. Unfortunately, my sister was not one of the lucky ones. For reasons that are whatever they are, Louise ended up with about two years of life—pretty good quality, to be fair—and by the end was having a lot of pain because by that point, it was in her bones and it was in her lungs.

My sister was also a schizophrenic. An irony about this whole thing is that as she was going through the palliative stages of dying, her schizophrenia kind of went away, which is maybe a good thing: that she had peace in the end in that sense.

The story I want to give is important because I think we need to hear the other side, and that is, when my sister was dying—I never cry in this House. Stop that. When my sister was dying, she said to me, "You need to understand that I am really worried about suffocating and the pain that comes from not breathing." She said, "With my illness, I'm not going to be able to deal with that. I've given instructions to the nurses and doctors, when I give them the sign that I'm ready to go, that I can't take the pain anymore, I want them to put me under with

morphine.” She would have chosen assisted dying, no question.

As family members, all of us would have done the same thing I did, which was, “No, Louise. You can have some more time.” I was very close to my sister, as my brother, Claude, was. We were a very close family. The irony of the story is that we never fought as children—true story. My sisters, my brother and I never fought—never fought as children and never fought as adults. We used to tease and say that mum and dad did enough fighting for us. We let them do the fighting when we were younger, and we just got along.

When Louise was in the palliative part of her life in the last, I would say, two, three, four days, whatever it was, I was travelling between here and Queen’s Park. It was just before the last provincial election, I believe, going into the minority, or maybe out of the minority; I can’t quite remember which one. She said, “I’ve made a decision. It’s really important that you respect my decision.” I said, “Louise, no. I’m not going to accept this. If I can keep you but for a little bit more time, every day I have with you is a treasure.” She said, “It’s not your life. It’s mine. I’m deciding when I want to go, and you have to respect that. If you really love me as my brother, you will allow my decision to stand and you will do what has to be done in order to assist with my decision.”

1400

That’s essentially what I did. I said to Louise, “I will be here every day.” I stayed with my sister 24 hours a day for about four or five days, whatever it was, in palliative services. Louise decided at one point, “I’m ready to go.” I said, “Louise, you know what this means? We will never talk again.” Louise said, “Yes, I know exactly what it means, but I am, right now, about to go out of my tree. I cannot breathe. I’m really feeling as if there’s something that’s going to happen. I’m going to gag, and I don’t want to go there. The pain is excruciating. Time to go.”

I did what Louise asked. The nurses came into the room and they gave her an injection of morphine and she fell asleep. She was in that state for three or four days, whatever it is. Again, I don’t remember. It’s a bit of a blur. But it taught me something, and that is, for my sister, that was important to her, and she needed to go out in a way that was right for her. It wasn’t about me. It wasn’t about my brother. It wasn’t about my late mother and father, who were dead at that point, and the rest of the family. It was about her choice.

I understand that this is a really personal debate because there are people who believe differently, and that’s fair. If my sister had said, “No, no. I’m going to make a different choice,” I would have respected that decision because it was her decision. I said, “Okay. If this is what you want to do,” and we did it.

What this whole experience taught me was, sometimes you go into life with a preconceived thought about things being a certain way, and you find out that, in fact, they’re different. It challenges your belief structure and it chal-

lenges your thought, because I never thought in a million years that I would ever support a decision like that for any family member. I never thought I’d be in that position, number one, because we’re all going to live forever—right?—especially when you’re kids growing up type of thing. Certainly I never thought in a million years I would even support such a decision.

What that taught me was that everybody is different. Every life is important, and everybody must be respected. Especially if you live in a place like where I live, in northern Ontario, where there are not a lot of doctors around, we need to have a system that allows those patients to make those decisions. That’s why I would hope that the government would have followed the Alberta model and had the referral system. I hear that there’s some work being done to get us there.

My vote today is respecting my sister, Louise. I will honour her thought and I will honour what she wanted to do, and I will vote against this legislation.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. John Fraser: It’s a pleasure to speak to Bill 129 here today. I would like to note that Bill 129 is almost a carbon copy of an amendment put forward in Bill 84, but a bit more about that later.

I want to say that medical assistance in dying is about a year old—not quite a year old in this country, so it’s something that’s new to us. I’ve told this story a number of times in the Legislature because it has helped to form part of my thinking on this. You’ll excuse me for repeating the story.

My mom is 85, and she’s a registered nurse. My mom is very devout. Her faith is her rock. When all of this started to happen, I asked my mom, “Do you think you could participate? Do you think you could assist in medical assistance in dying?” She said to me, “No, I don’t think I could because I believe God gives and takes life away,” and in the next breath she said, “But there are extreme circumstances.”

What that said to me was, “You are asking me a question to which I have no proximity. It is not there in front of me. I’m not on a battlefield where someone is suffering and likely to die. I’m not in a situation where someone is having hundreds of spasms an hour that are uncontrollable. So I don’t actually have the answer to that question. What you’re asking me is what I believe, but it’s not necessarily what I know.”

This became law last year, and we’ve all been working and the province has been working trying to get it. We put forward Bill 84 to try to strike a balance. I’ll talk a bit more about that later. But we do know that, under the charter, the conscience rights of practitioners are protected, because they are not required to perform MAID, assist in performing MAID or assess for the purposes of MAID, medical assistance in dying.

The court went on further to say that there would be a need to balance the rights of conscience and the rights of access for patients. They said that expressly: the need to balance those two. That is what our challenge is as

legislators. Speaker, I would argue that that is our collective challenge: to balance those rights. I really do believe that it's critical.

On Bill 84, we heard many different deputations, and everybody who came with a deputation came, I believe, out of their own conscience. I don't think one side had all the conscience. Everybody, I believe, came there in good faith, in good conscience, and told us how they felt.

I want to thank the member from Timmins—James Bay for his remarks, and telling a very personally difficult story to tell in a room full of people. As legislators—not just on this issue, but on every issue—our job is to hear the voices that are really, really hard to hear, that are far away from us, that are somewhere over there. We have to get into that. We have to be there. We have to hear those voices, and when someone comes to us—any of us—and they have grievous and irremediable suffering, we have a moral obligation to put them on a safe path. We have a moral obligation to do that, to help that person who is saying, “I need your help.” It doesn't matter who you are or what you do. Any of us, if we walk out on the street tomorrow and we find that, we can't walk away. More than just not walking away; we have an obligation to try to do our best, to do whatever it is we can to help that person.

In my own community, we have objecting physicians who are working both in hospice and in hospital. I know them personally. They are men of deep faith, and what they've said to themselves is, “The skill that I have, the thing that I can do to help these people, I need to continue to give them. I have to get them on a path, and if I can follow them on that path”—that's a brave and courageous thing. Often things are uncomfortable in life. People throw things in front of us, and we have to make a decision. It's not all cut and dried. We get surprised. We have to deal with things that are not in our comfort zone, and it takes effort.

To be fair to everyone, not everybody is equally prepared when those things confront us. That is why in Bill 84 there is a legislated requirement to have a care coordination service: because it was important to create a pathway that people could access on their own, and so that practitioners, in conscience, could get the people who were in front of them saying, “Help me,” on a path. That path not only includes medical assistance in dying, but access to palliative care.

Palliative care does not necessarily include medical assistance in dying. Medical assistance in dying must include access to palliative care, and that's why that service is there: to be able to fulfill what I believe is a bare minimum human moral obligation to help someone who's saying, “Help me, please.”

I believe very strongly in that. I believe that that is an obligation that we all have, and I take that obligation seriously as a legislator. I'm not saying that these things are easy. We're put in very uncomfortable, unfamiliar situations, and we have to do our best and put those people who are at the centre of what we're talking about truly at the centre. I feel that through Bill 84 we achieved

that balance. We achieved that balance that we needed to, to create that pathway for those practitioners who that was a challenge for—not for the ones who found a way—or to provide an opportunity for people to find a way to have an alternative until they find a way. But you have to find a way. You have to find a way to get people to a safe place. It's the right thing to do.

1410

In committee, we put forward twice—and I want to read this part of our preamble to the bill:

“The people of Ontario and their government recognize:

“That the government of Ontario is committed to uphold the principles set out in the Canada Health Act—public administration, comprehensiveness, universality, portability and accessibility—with respect to medical assistance in dying.

“That everyone has freedom of conscience and religion under section 2 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and that nothing in this act affects the guarantee of freedom of conscience and religion.”

Twice, at the beginning of this bill and then at the end of the bill, we asked for unanimous consent, which the party opposite would not give, just to debate it—not to pass that piece; just to talk about it. We asked for unanimous consent so we could talk about it.

Interestingly enough, when that clause that's mirrored in Bill 129 came up, no one on the other side asked for unanimous consent, which we were prepared to give. I would have liked to have debated that in committee, and we could have debated it again here. I don't believe that it meets the test set out by the Supreme Court, which is to balance those rights. Bill 129 does not do that. It does not achieve that. It permits, I believe, an exception that would undermine the responsibility to ensure that people got onto a safe path.

I think that we struck the right balance. I think we all have to continue to work hard to make sure that people get access to palliative and end-of-life care. We have to all work hard as legislators working inside government.

I want to thank you, Speaker, for the time to speak about this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate? I recognize the member from Leeds—Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: Thanks, Madam Speaker. It's always nice see you in the chair on Thursday afternoon.

I'm pleased to support Bill 129, the Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act (Freedom of Conscience in Health Care) that's being proposed by my friend the member for Elgin—Middlesex—London. I support this bill 100%. I want to commend our health critic, Mr. Yurek, for bringing this very important bill to the floor of the Legislature.

I have to tell you, Speaker, I'm very, very disappointed in the government that we're actually having this debate today. During Bill 84's second reading debate, the government talked about being open to hearing our side, particularly on the critical issue of conscience rights for physicians and other health care providers.

I appreciate the member for Ottawa South using the words “safe path.” He used those same words during second reading debate. I’ll get back to those words a little later in my comments.

However, despite the entire second reading debate, this government never said whether they would support our amendments for conscience rights. That’s why on March 7, in second reading debate, I said the following:

“We have to see that this government is willing to put an amendment forward in this bill to deal with conscience rights. We want to see it. I personally feel that if we don’t see it, then we should table a private member’s bill that puts it in. That’s my personal feeling. I do think that rather than words like ‘evolve,’ we need to see this government take our comments and our communities’ comments seriously.”

So I was very clear right from the start where the previous Bill 84 should be, and I’m very glad that the member brought forward this amendment to ensure that we’re going to be talking about including it in this bill.

Let’s review what happened at committee, to see how seriously we took our comments and our community’s comments.

I was there for clause-by-clause. I was substituted in for Mr. Yurek that day, and I moved our amendments. I was disgusted with the fact that this government’s outright contempt for a collaborative process was again on full display at the committee. All of the wonderful talk this government had at second reading vanished under the orders, I think, from Premier Wynne’s office. I think it came from a direct order from the Premier’s office that those amendments be defeated. One by one, our amendments were shot down, including conscience rights protection for health care professionals.

I want to address the member for Ottawa South’s comments, Speaker, if I might. He did try to get the preamble changed. As he mentioned, one of the times was after they voted down every single amendment that we tried to put in to provide those conscience rights.

In fact, when it came back to the floor, I made sure—I put on the record—that we have the tools available under our standing orders. We could have brought this back up and opened up Bill 84 on the floor of the House, using Committee of the Whole House. We could have put back our amendments that were defeated at committee. We could have even put back his preamble if there had been that collaborative process.

There was no process from the government House leader’s staff to get those amendments back on the floor. There was no will from the Liberal Party to open up Bill 84 and include conscience rights protection. We have the tools in our standing orders, Speaker, where we could have done this.

It’s important to stress that our amendments, and the bill that is before us today—Mr. Yurek’s bill, Bill 129—won’t deny a single Ontarian access to MAID. That’s something the Supreme Court ruled out. They have a right to it, and we can’t, as a Legislature, stand in someone’s way to have that safe path. We cannot stand in their way.

But we can do something. We can allow patients to have that right, while at the same time respecting the conscience rights of doctors, nurses and any other health care provider who does not want to participate. Many other jurisdictions have done it, Speaker. The only thing preventing it from being the law of the land in Ontario is this government.

We’re going to have doctors leaving the profession because of it. We’re the only jurisdiction, as Mr. Yurek said—other jurisdictions have been able to have that safe path for the patient while including conscience rights as part of the bill.

Again, I want to praise my colleague for the bill. It’s the right thing to do. I hope the government will recognize—I hope the backbenchers will recognize—the mistake they did during second reading, during committee and during third reading debate for Bill 84, and that they’ll support Bill 129.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Many of you know that I’m a United Church minister. There is absolutely nothing more important to me than my allegiance to my Christian faith and to God. That’s paramount in my life.

I have, in my life as a Christian minister, sat at the bedside of an AIDS patient dying in excruciating pain, before there were options available. That has been part of my duty as a chaplain.

I have also sat with a family whose 12-year-old child was impregnated by a pedophile and who had decided to terminate that pregnancy. I supported them, too. That was also part of my job as a chaplain.

I want to uphold my faith in this discussion, because this really hinges on faith.

There are two things we know as Christians. One thing is paramount, and we all share this: that this life is not all there is, and that we should no longer condemn to death—I think we are agreed on that—but neither should we condemn to live. That’s the other thing.

The other truth—and it’s a theological truth from the Reformation—is that we are a priesthood of all believers; that is, we stand before our God—we don’t have to go through a priest; we don’t have to go through an intermediary—but each one of us is responsible ethically and morally to stand before our God and to account for our lives, and that day of reckoning will come. That is up to us. It is not up to our doctors. It is not up to our priests. It is not up to anyone else but us, and it is our sacred responsibility to uphold that, as people of faith.

1420

That is the ultimate right and freedom that we have, and no one should take that right or that freedom away from us—not our doctor, not our priest, not our church, not the government, not the state, not anyone. That is our right. And it is our right to be so condemned, or to be so saved, in that meeting.

I completely have respect for the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London. I understand where he’s coming from. I understand how difficult and how horrible and

how impossible it is sometimes for professionals to make that call. It's not their call. It's not your call. It is the call of each individual to make that call. If we as chaplains and as Christians stand with those who put their faith in us, we give them the respect to be able to make that moral stance before their God, the God of their lives, to decide for themselves how to live and how to die. Whether we agree or whether we disagree, we should never as Christians take that right away from them. That is their sacred right.

We should not, of course, force any medical professional, any priest or any chaplain to put into action something that they don't want to do. Of course we get that. But that is not what this bill is about. This is about a referral.

I heard the member say, "But you can, through the Alberta model, make referrals without a doctor." But here is the situation. The reality is that people will come into your office. People will pick up the phone and call me, as a chaplain in the United Church, as a minister. They will ask me, "Will you come to our bedside? I'm dying of AIDS." "Will you come? My child has been raped and I want to terminate the pregnancy." Am I to say no? Would my God want me to say no? Would you as a doctor want to say, "No, I'm not going to see you"? I would suggest that this will happen whether you want it to or not. It's part of what happens in our lives. Things are thrust upon us. And I would suggest that you go back to the Bible and you go back to the faith and you say, "It's really between you and your God."

This is not just Christian; this is true of all faiths. It's between you and your God. It's between you and your conscience. Who am I, or anyone, to stand between you and your God—you and your conscience?

Whatever we think of what people do with their lives, all we can do at best is to love them; to love them as we would be loved and to love the Lord our God with all our heart and our soul and our mind. That's all we can do. We cannot judge. We have been told, "Judge not." That is a critical commandment through all faiths: "Judge not, lest you be judged." Judge not, and love your neighbour as yourself—critical commandments.

I think that you can't go wrong with that. You can't go wrong, but you can sadly, but truly, vote against this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I first want to reiterate what I have stated in this Legislature and outside many, many times, which is my deepest and utmost respect for those health care providers who, for reasons of conscience, because of moral or ethical or religious perspectives and views and adherences in the case of medical assistance in dying, choose not to participate. I respect, as the charter of this country does, their right to act in principle with, and in accordance with, their conscience.

In Bill 84, we have now passed that piece of legislation that provides protections for health workers as well as for patients and families that might find themselves in those end-of-life challenges. It's important to point out

that the federal legislation also speaks to, very specifically, the conscience rights of health care providers, as it does to the imperative of patient access to care, to a service which is legally available in this country.

It's worth repeating as well, as I said before, that we tried twice to introduce and pass amendments to this bill which would have had the effect—in fact, which would have reaffirmed conscience rights, which would have spoken to patients' right to access.

We attempted twice during committee to have those amendments passed. We received the support of the NDP. However, because we required unanimous consent, the Progressive Conservative Party voted against that amendment, not once but twice.

I'm proud of the legislation that we have before us. I believe that the legislation, as it sits, creates that appropriate balance. We have created a care coordination service like Alberta has.

We have the ability of Ontarians, any Ontarian, whether they're a health care provider or a citizen, a family member, or a patient, to be able to access that service.

Interjections.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I know that the opposition is heckling me at this moment—the Conservatives—but the reality is that we tried twice—

Mr. Michael Harris: Well, then, tell the truth.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The member needs to withdraw. You know who you are. The member from Kitchener-Conestoga.

Mr. Michael Harris: I'll withdraw.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): You know who you are. I have a list of all the warnings. It still applies today, this afternoon.

I return to the minister.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: In closing, Madam Speaker, we tried twice to have, in the legislation, clearly asserted conscience rights. The PCs voted against it.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: We shouldn't even be here discussing this today. The debate on medical assistance in dying was over. We're here today because it passed without the freedom-of-conscience rights for physicians and health care providers.

I am going to go off my script for a moment to discuss what we just heard from the Minister of Health. His comment about an amendment actually is not correct. It was a preamble that they tried to put in. A preamble will not protect any of the people. It won't protect them in court. It won't protect them, period.

That is why we attempted to pass amendments. These amendments would form part of the bill, and that is what you can rely on outside of the Legislature, not a preamble. A preamble is where the pretty words go. That's all they were: just words.

This morning, Ontario PC health critic Jeff Yurek, from Elgin-Middlesex-London, introduced his private member's bill that would fix this. This would amend the

government's medical-assistance-in-dying legislation to protect the conscience rights of health care providers, plain and simple.

This vote today on An Act to amend the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 with respect to medical assistance in dying will make participation in MAID voluntary. This will allow health care professionals to refuse to directly or indirectly participate in MAID, if it violates their conscience or religious beliefs, without facing discipline from their regulatory college.

Speaker, this is a bill. This isn't a preamble and an introduction to a bill. This is the bill that will fix that.

Again, this should never have become a political decision or a political debate. But, very sadly, the Liberal government did not enshrine the conscience rights of doctors and health care professionals in this province, so again, we're here. We tried to correct this five times through proper amendments, all turned down by the Liberal government—all turned down, all five. Those are the facts.

Of course, we're extremely disappointed that the Liberal government voted against these amendments that would have removed the requirements for health care professionals to participate in medical assistance in dying.

It's very sad that it has come back to this Legislature, where we have an opportunity, at least. We're thankful for Mr. Yurek's bill today, which I will be fully supporting.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

1430

Mr. Michael Harris: I'm here to provide a voice for those dedicated doctors and medical professionals across our province calling for balance between access to medical assistance in dying for those who qualify and want it, and the right of health care practitioners to act according to their beliefs.

I can tell you, Speaker, since holding a round table on this very subject back in November with my federal counterpart, Harold Albrecht—and I want to commend him on his palliative care work federally—the call for that balance to be struck has only grown louder as we await an indication that we are at least being heard.

I want to thank my colleague from Elgin–Middlesex–London for bringing this important initiative forward.

It was after that round table in Kitchener when the Waterloo Record's Luisa D'Amato published a commentary under the title, "On Assisted Suicide, Let's remember that Doctors Have Rights Too." I'll read a few of her insights, as she did do a good job of capturing the essence of the debate. She said:

"Physicians are supposed to save lives, not hasten death.

"So it's not surprising that some doctors are having problems seeing how they fit into Canada's new law that legalizes physician-assisted suicide for some patients."

While other provinces have taken steps to respect the rights of health care professionals and their conscience,

the Wynne Liberal government has done nothing to ensure that these concerns are addressed. Bottom line: In other jurisdictions, they're able to balance the rights of patients to access medically assisted death with doctors' rights of conscience. We should be able to achieve that same balance here in Ontario.

If this were a question of access to services that the federal government has guaranteed citizens the right to, we could better understand the debate, but it was confirmed at committee that protection of the conscience rights of health care professionals does not and will not impede access to MAID. That's why other provinces have seen a way through to protecting conscience rights, while Ontario stands alone as the province that is failing to protect these fundamental rights.

I want to read an op-ed done by former Liberal cabinet minister John Milloy. He talks about not turning this debate into a hot-button issue. There was a time when there was outrage here at Queen's Park over the proposed Quebec charter of values. Remember that. Ontario's then-Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Michael Coteau, "put out a statement criticizing the legislation and confirming the Ontario government's commitment to 'freedom of expression and religion.'"

He goes on to say, "Why did we try to persuade doctors that our province respects their freedoms back then and yet can't take their freedom of conscience seriously now? What has changed?" John Milloy, Liberal cabinet minister.

I agree with him, and I appreciate his work on this file. It shouldn't be a hot-button issue.

That's why we're here again today: to forge ahead on the path that other provinces have followed to have legislation that respects patient wishes while recognizing the conscience rights of our vital health care professionals. I hope the government today will listen and do what is right for medical professionals right across our province.

I thank my colleague, again, from Elgin–Middlesex–London for bringing this important initiative to the floor today. I will be supporting this piece of legislation.

Interruption.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I just want to remind our visitors that we welcome all of our visitors, but you're not allowed to participate in the debate, including clapping.

Further debate? I'll return to the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London for the wrap-up, please.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. You've heard how contentious this topic is and how much people take it to heart.

I want to thank the member from Timmins–James Bay for his comments. I met Claude—a very, very friendly guy. I can just imagine what your sister was like, and I'm very, very sorry for your loss.

Unfortunately, if we don't protect the conscience protections of our health care professionals, you, living in northern Ontario, might not have those doctors around to seek out these treatments. That's why the referral system

is really essential, but also ensuring that the protections are there to guide and help people through the palliative care process. I appreciate that.

The member from Ottawa–South: I appreciate your comments as well. However, under your argument—your mom said she doesn’t want to participate in medical assistance in dying. But by their inaction, she would have to participate in medical assistance in dying. I would hope that you would be understanding of your mom’s own conscience and rights, and support her.

Member from Leeds–Grenville: I very strongly thank you for helping out during the committee time and laying out the truth of what occurred during committee.

Parkdale–High Park: Thank you very much for your words as well. We just disagree. I respect your thoughts and values, but I guess we’ll be on opposite sides of this issue here.

Kitchener–Conestoga: Thank you very much for your words. You’ve been a strong advocate for this piece of legislation, particularly in the Kitchener region. I look forward to further working with them.

Of course, the Minister of Health to show up, to actually have the minister here to speak about a bill, shows how important the issue is. I appreciate the words that he did say about trying to change the preamble. But now is the time to have action—action to the words you just said about ensuring conscience protection for health care professionals.

Vote for the legislation today. Vote for this bill that is before the Legislature. Protect the conscience rights of health care professionals. Protect the freedoms of people. Doctors and health care professionals deserve the same rights—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. We will vote on this item at the end of private members’ public business.

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

Mr. Granville Anderson: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario should proclaim the third week of May as Young Professionals Week to recognize and celebrate the vital role the young professional plays in our communities.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. Anderson has moved private member’s notice of motion number 58. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Granville Anderson: I rise today to move the motion that, in the opinion of this House, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario should proclaim the third week of May as Young Professionals Week to recognize and celebrate the vital role the young professional plays in our communities. We have some of these young professionals here with us today. First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge them.

I would also like to acknowledge the Young Professionals Network of Ontario’s efforts and advocacy on this important initiative. This not-for-profit organization

brings the under-40 demographic together to socialize, mobilize and realize personal, professional and community development. The Young Professionals Network of Ontario, YPNO, is designated to connect and engage young professionals across this province.

As you all know, young professionals play such an important role within our communities throughout Ontario. It is vital that we recognize their ongoing efforts and contributions, as well as provide them with the adequate resources they need to succeed.

In my riding of Durham, the Clarington Board of Trade offers Clarington’s Young Entrepreneurs and Professionals. YEP provides young professionals with an engaging and empowering community to improve their networking skills, expand contact bases, advance careers and make a difference in Clarington.

Clarington, like many other areas across our great province, is a vibrant and growing community with wonderful opportunities for young professionals to start, build and foster successful careers and livelihoods.

One such professional I am familiar with started a business in Bowmanville just over four years ago. Her name is Nicole McGarry. She is the owner of the Toasted Walnut café and restaurant in Bowmanville. I don’t know how many of you have visited that location. It’s always packed, and it’s a successful, thriving business. I go there a lot at lunchtime, whenever I’m in the riding. It’s within walking distance of my constituency office. Sometimes I have to wait in line to get in; that’s how busy it is and how successful it is.

There’s also a young man—Chris Allott, founder and brewmaster of Manantler brewery.

These are examples of just a couple of hard-working and inspiring young professionals in my riding of Durham. There are too many to mention.

There are many more successful young entrepreneurs in my riding and throughout Durham region and throughout this great province who have contributed so much to our economy. They’re real role models for other young people to follow in various communities across this province. I am so proud of the unique contributions that they provide to Ontario and to my community.

Madam Speaker, in addition, today I’d like to specifically acknowledge the hard work and dedication of three Durham College students who are here with us today in the gallery. I would first like to acknowledge Brittany Charlton. Brittany graduated from the law clerk advanced program at Durham College in 2016. She has a company. The goal of her company—it’s Ohh Products—is to provide healthy, allergen-free snacks to individuals who struggle with dietary restrictions. She believes that her passion for health and wellness is what makes her a promising young professional, combined with her ability to take her own restrictions and make a product to help others who face similar issues. Brittany’s company, Ohh Products, creates foods that taste great and are made up of 100% natural and lactose-free ingredients. Brittany credits the FastStart DC team with helping her throughout her business journey.

1440

Secondly, I would like to take this time to acknowledge Gregory Barnes. He's the co-founder and CTO at Henlen Watches, and has always found a love for technology. At Henlen, Gregory oversees the development of its interchangeable smart watches and negotiates with and sources manufacturers. At Durham College, he studies electromechanical engineering, broadening his technical knowledge. Gregory is also co-president of Enactus DC, part of a worldwide student organization that aims to empower communities through social entrepreneurial endeavours, and has recently led the team to the national level in BC. At Enactus, he has discovered more about social entrepreneurship, something he will continue to strive towards in the future.

Madam Speaker, lastly, I would like to acknowledge Rachel Enright. Rachel is a single mother who started her own college career at Durham College, when her daughter was six months old, in the computer programmer analyst stream. She will be returning in the fall to the advertising and marketing program. Rachel participates heavily with the FastStart office and attended many events with them, such as OCE that just passed. In September, she will also be looking to join the Enactus team.

With the help of the FastStart office, she started her business, RÜTS Cosmetics, with the goal of bringing beautiful, custom and ethical colour cosmetics to her community. She has been in business for six months and launched just this past Friday with tremendous promise and made \$150 before hitting her second hour. So \$150 an hour, Madam Speaker—that's commendable. Rachel also participates heavily with Durham's entrepreneurship circle and took home first place this week at HustleMe, which is an on-the-fly pitching competition hosted at the Tap and Tankard, in partnership with Startup Durham.

I would like to take this time to congratulate these individuals on their continuous hard work and their ongoing efforts in contributing to our community.

In addition, I am so happy that Durham College provides students with these wonderful resources required to succeed in their individual journeys.

Madam Speaker, as you know, there are so many young professionals across our great province of Ontario who are doing amazing things for their communities. Young professionals come from diverse skill sets, backgrounds and sectors.

I encourage all members of this House to support this motion, and join me in their communities in recognizing and celebrating young professionals and their outstanding contributions to our province and to the economy in Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm delighted to be able to speak on this motion, as it provides an opportunity to profile the innovative and socially conscious young professionals and entrepreneurs from the Whitby–Oshawa community. Whether it's Jason Atkins from 360insights or one of the

many other rising young entrepreneurs in the communities of Whitby and Oshawa, each is having a positive impact. These are young women and men with passion, distinguished by their drive and enthusiasm for new ideas; professionals who dare to think outside the box.

Over the past year I have spoken to leaders of young professional networks across the region of Durham, and one thing became clear through these discussions: Young professionals are making a huge impact in their communities and beyond. Not only are these individuals the leaders of tomorrow, but they are the leaders of today involved in all aspects of their communities. Their drive, inspiration and creativity continue to help us effect and, most importantly, sustain healthy and sustainable communities.

That is why it's crucial to recognize these young professionals for their contributions, not only for the impact that they're having today, but also with an aim to encourage younger Ontarians to also take up the torch of innovation and socially conscious behaviour in their respective communities.

I'm pleased, therefore, to support this motion from my colleague from Durham, and I will continue to trumpet the ongoing successes of young professionals living in the region of Durham and throughout this great province of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It is a pleasure for me to rise, as MPP for London West and also as the Ontario NDP critic for advanced education and skills development, to speak to the motion before us this afternoon to declare Young Professionals Week.

Certainly this is a motion that we are pleased to support because absolutely we agree that the contributions of young professionals to our economy and to our social, economic and cultural well-being should be acknowledged and celebrated.

However, we do have concerns about the number of young professionals who are graduating from post-secondary education with debts the size of a mortgage, quite frankly. The average debt load for an undergraduate student who incurs debt in this province is \$28,000 a year. For young professionals who go to a professional school, they are graduating with debt loads of \$35,000, \$40,000 or more. That is quite a burden that we are placing on these young people as they look to start their careers.

Another concern we have is the kind of labour market opportunities that are available to young professionals in this province. We've been hearing a lot recently about the gig economy. These are the kinds of precarious labour market opportunities where people move from contract to contract, freelance project to freelance project with no job security, no benefits, no ability to start planning for retirement. Many of the people who are working in the gig economy are doing so because they cannot find the full-time work that people in our generation were able to find when we graduated from post-secondary and entered the workforce.

Last month there was a report put out by Generation Squeeze called Code Red, and that report noted that the standard of living has deteriorated more dramatically for young people in Ontario than in any other province in Canada, with the exception of BC. In Ontario, young people reported a decline in full-time earnings—that is, young people in their early working years, ages 25 to 34—and we were the only province within the last decade where those earnings declined for young people in that age cohort.

Young Ontarians are earning much less than the national average, and this creates real barriers when young professionals are looking to have a family. They are hoping to be able to buy a house. They are hoping to be able to move forward with their lives. They are carrying these huge debts, and they are also faced with this decline in the standard of living.

1450

We know that for those young professionals who do have young families, child care now costs more in Ontario than undergraduate tuition. Imagine that, Speaker. Imagine that you are carrying this huge debt, you are going into a labour market where all you have available to you are gigs—one here, one there, one-off gigs—and you have a young family. If you are able to find child care, you're going to end up paying more for child care than you did for your university tuition.

This is unacceptable. We are creating huge barriers for young professionals when they complete their post-secondary education. They want to contribute to our economy. They want to raise the standard of living and share in the prosperity that we all hope for for families in this province.

Speaker, we have heard the government talk about the Career Kick-Start Strategy, which is wisely designed to give more young people access to work opportunities while they are studying. This is something that I have advocated for strongly since when I was first elected, so I'm very pleased to see that initiative from the government, because the research shows that it will help young people enter the labour market. It will help these young professionals get the kind of career that uses the skills that they acquired while they were in post-secondary education.

However, we have not heard from this government, in relation to Career Kick-Start, how much they are going to do to ensure that these work opportunities that are available to students are paid. There is a vast amount of research that shows that unpaid work opportunities provide very little benefit in terms of access to the labour market; it is those paid internships, paid co-ops and paid field placements that are the opportunities that will really give young people a leg up, so that when they enter the labour market they are able to apply the skills that they gained while they were in post-secondary.

So yes, let's support this motion, but let's do much, much more than that to ensure that young people, young professionals, are able to enter the labour market and actually use the skills that they gain.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Yvan Baker: It's a privilege to rise and speak to this bill celebrating young professionals. I have to say, Speaker, that I'm biased—getting to speak to this bill as a young professional myself.

Applause.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Thank you. Previously I was a young professional in business, and now I'm a young professional in government and politics, and one of the things I know as a young professional is how important it is that we celebrate the contributions of young professionals, and that we keep our eye on the issues that are important to young people of all backgrounds, but specifically young professionals as well and those people across Ontario under 40.

That's really what this bill is about. That's really what my colleague to my left here is trying to celebrate and make sure we focus on—that we celebrate the contributions of young professionals, but that we also, especially as government, keep our eye on those issues that touch on them.

I think this is really important for a number of reasons. First of all, I very often have the opportunity to go out and talk to young people in this role, as MPP. When I talk to young people, I often remind them or share with them that the issues that touch on them very often are those that sometimes don't get the attention that they deserve from all levels of government and from different political parties. They don't get that attention very often because young people tend to be a little bit less engaged in government and politics than others. So I advocate for them to get involved and get engaged.

I also try to share with them something that I've learned since being here in public office: that the decisions that government makes very often touch young people more than any other age cohort. The reason that is is because oftentimes government decisions take time to be made and they take time to be implemented. And by the time they're implemented, the folks who are today young are the folks who are most impacted by it. So it's very important that we keep our eye on the issues that matter most to young people, and this bill reminds us to do that.

In a previous life, when I was a young professional in business, I worked as a management consultant for a company called the Boston Consulting Group. This is a company that advises large private sector corporations on how to invest their money, on how to be successful and on how to overcome some of the more complex challenges that businesses face. It was staffed almost entirely by young people, almost entirely by people under 40.

So young people are making contributions, very often in ways that we don't even realize, in shaping the decisions of—either they are the most influential decision-makers in our society or they're influencing the decisions of the most influential decision-makers in our society.

As I look around Queen's Park and I look at the people who work for me and I look at the people who

work for our ministers and the members of the opposition, many of them are young people as well, and they're helping to shape the decisions as well. These are just examples of how young professionals are having an impact in Ontario and across our country.

When I was at Boston Consulting Group, I volunteered to work on a project with an organization called CivicAction. I worked with a group of young people to look at how we could grow the economy in the greater Toronto area—what could be done by business, by policy makers, by the not-for-profit sector to grow our economy. We did a tremendous amount of research, we talked to some of the experts in the field, and what we discovered was that one of the leading ways in which you can grow an economy is to attract and retain what we called the “leaders and innovators”—in every field, in every sector. One of the things that we also discovered was that one of the ways in which you can do that is to make sure that you attract those people and retain them when they're young.

So, Speaker, I'm really proud to be speaking to this bill and I'm proud of the member for Durham for introducing it because I think that one of the things that we can do to support our economy and our broader welfare is to make sure that we are thinking about the issues that matter to young people under 40, and retaining and attracting some of the most talented young people to live and work here in Ontario—not only because it creates opportunities for them, but because it creates opportunities for all of us.

One of the ways in which we can do that is to encourage entrepreneurship. One of the things that we see more and more—our Minister of Economic Development is here, and I know that he understands this—is how our economy is evolving and how entrepreneurship is becoming an increasingly important component of our economy. A large percentage of those people who start businesses, who are going to be the leaders and innovators of tomorrow, who are going to drive our economy, are those people we're celebrating through this bill here today. So it's really important that we encourage entrepreneurship.

There's a wonderful organization that's been here to Queen's Park on a number of occasions called Futurpreneur. I'm incredibly proud of the work that they're doing. I actually had the privilege of hosting them at a reception for all MPPs here a number of months ago. They help young people build their businesses up. Very often when a young person wants to start a business they don't know how to go about it, they don't know where to find the financing. They need mentorship, they need advice, they need access to people in the field. Futurpreneur helps them achieve those contacts, get that support and, ultimately, succeed in starting their small businesses. There are countless small businesses that Futurpreneur has helped to launch, has supported in launching, and there will be many more in the future. This is one example of how government can support organizations like Futurpreneur to make sure that entrepreneurship in our economy is growing.

Another thing, Speaker, that I have done personally in this regard is—I have a youth advisory group in my riding, in Etobicoke Centre. I meet regularly with young people—some of them are in high school, but some of them are young professionals—to hear from them the issues that are important to them. We meet quarterly. What I do is, I try to make sure that I'm an advocate on their behalf here in government—with our ministers, with our Premier, with our caucus—on the issues that they raise with me. That's one of the things that I do.

Another thing that I'd like to speak to briefly, though, in this context is something that the member from London West alluded to, which is the fact that we need to make sure that young people who are doing all of the things that they're supposed to do to establish their professions and to become young professionals—that we give them every opportunity to succeed. We've done a tremendous amount of work in that regard. The new OSAP is a big step in that because we're providing more young people with access to post-secondary education, which allows more young people, therefore, to pursue their dreams, pursue those professions.

1500

But we also have to make sure that we're helping them make the right choices. It's in that vein that I introduced a bill called the Pathways to Post-secondary Excellence Act. It's a bill that would require the government of Ontario to provide a website that has every program at every college and university in Ontario listed there and where there would be information about each of those programs that students can look at very briefly as they're making the decision as to what their profession will be, as they're making the decision as to what their post-secondary trajectory will be, what program they will take, what university they will study at, what college they will study at, so that they can make the most informed choice possible. Too many young people do pursue a post-secondary education that doesn't allow them to achieve the goals that they had anticipated. That's another thing that I hope we can move forward.

All this is to say that I'm incredibly proud to stand and speak to this bill, in support of the member from Durham. Young professionals are making incredible contributions to our society. I spoke about that. The issues that touch them are incredibly important. They touch all of us, and it's important that we keep our eye on them. This motion will help us to do just that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): Now for further questions and comments I turn to the honourable member from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a pleasure to stand and speak to this resolution from my colleague the member from Durham.

I'm very excited in regard to economic development in our backyard and the creation of employment opportunities with young professionals, particularly at Bruce Power—all kinds of trades opportunities for those professionals: boilermakers, carpenters, scaffolders, electricians, insulators, ironworkers, labourers, millwrights,

operating engineers, painters, pipefitters, steam fitters, plumbers, sheet metal workers, teamsters, brick and tile makers, nuclear operators, safety and radiation technicians, quality assurance folks, HR, project managers, accountants, cost and scheduling analysts, legal and environmental officers, mechanical engineers, chemical engineers, civil engineers.

There are effective partnerships with educational institutions to offer programming based on workforce demands; specifically, the \$7.5-million new state-of-the-art marine emergency duties training and research centre at Georgian College. It is attracting people from across the world.

The Great Lakes shipping industry is going through a change of generations, so there are lots of exciting opportunities there—both there and in the fishing and the shipping industries, where the retirement age is changing the opportunities.

Infrastructure planning: I'm very excited with South-Western Integrated Fibre Technology, which is advocating for the connection of 350 communities with over 3.5 million people from the Bruce Peninsula. That's going to allow people to work from home in our own backyard.

What's really interesting is that Young Professionals Network of Ontario says that our young professionals' number one priority is the Ontario provincial deficit and debt. They want to see a robust plan to reduce spending and tackle the debt. It's very interesting to know all that.

I think the opportunity is huge for our youth, and I'm excited to see this resolution go through.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Catherine Fife: That's a hard act to follow, based on speed alone.

New Democrats support the motion that has been put forward by the honourable member opposite, but we have to be really clear about what this motion does. It proclaims the third week of May as Young Professionals Week, which is great. It's fine. But I have to tell you: There's so much more we could be doing to ensure that young professionals in the province of Ontario find a pathway to success.

I'm thinking in particular of some of the comments that the member from London West mentioned around the new reality that young professionals face in the province of Ontario—of the gig economy, of the so-called sharing economy, which really isn't about sharing; it's about people whittling out an existence in the province of Ontario through more part-time, precarious contract work, which is fully supported by the Employment Standards Act in the province of Ontario.

There are tangible, structural things that this government can be doing to ensure that the reality that did come out in the Generation Squeeze report, which shows that Ontario does have the highest youth unemployment in the province—

Interjection.

Ms. Catherine Fife: —nothing to cheer about over there, Ms. MacLeod—and also that young Ontarians are

making so little money compared to the generation before them. This is the reality of young professionals in the province of Ontario.

I think about women and men in the start-up economy. Kitchener–Waterloo is definitely a hub and has a wonderful ecosystem to support this, but there are gender differences that young professionals experience in the province of Ontario, which maybe in some third week in May we may talk about more.

A crucial component of individuals trying to get their start-up off the ground is funding, which more often than not comes from venture capitalists.

There was a study that just came out earlier this week, from Sweden, and it's through the Harvard Business Review, which studied the language used to describe male and female entrepreneurs. Their findings show that language used is radically different based on whether the entrepreneur is a male or female.

The group analyzed 125 different venture applications; 79% of those applications came from men, only 21% came from women. Aside from a few exceptions, the financiers rhetorically produced stereotypical images of women having qualities opposite to those considered important to being an entrepreneur, with venture capitalists questioning their credibility, their trustworthiness, their experience and their knowledge. Conversely, when assessing males, financiers leaned on stereotypical beliefs about men that reinforced their entrepreneurial potential. Male entrepreneurs were described as competent, experienced, knowledgeable and having established networks.

There's a great divide in the province of Ontario between men and women, young and professional, and the opportunities that are afforded to them. There are structural things—policy and legislation, actually—that could level the playing field for those men and women. Unsurprisingly, these stereotypes seemed to have played a role in who got funding and who didn't.

In Waterloo, though, we have something that is actually supported by multiple levels of government and, of course, some businesses. It's called the Fierce Founders program. It's run through Communitech. This is a program that aims to upend these biases and shatter glass ceilings with boot camps, accelerators and smart women leading them. They offer a two-part, six-day boot camp focused on customer validation, business fundamentals and refining your pitch. The importance of mentorship for young professionals in the province of Ontario—the research, the evidence is so supportive of this direction that we need to go in.

Now, I've had several opportunities recently to speak to young women about their prospects of entering fields where women are traditionally under-represented. There was the Equithon at UW as part of the UN's HeForShe campaign, which looked at hackers trying to address this inequity, which was really interesting. Next week, I'm going to be speaking at the Canadian Youth STEM Conference run by a fantastic group of students from Glenforest Secondary School, which is in Peel District School Board.

Fierce Founders is making a fundamental difference for young professionals, because it's providing the social infrastructure, the networking, the access to capital so that these great start-ups and innovative ideas can come to the fore. It was launched four years ago. It started as a series of boot camps for companies with women in leadership. Last year, the program launched the accelerator to help Fierce Founder boot camp's grads continue to build up their businesses.

Are our professionals an integral part of our economy in the province of Ontario? Absolutely. Are they anywhere close to reaching their potential in the province of Ontario? I would say no. Will having the third week in May give us an opportunity to address some of the policy issues and the legislative issues that need be addressed in this Legislature and in this province? Obviously.

We will be supporting the motion, but we continue to do the hard work of pushing the agenda to make sure that there is equality in these opportunities.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): I now call for further debate.

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to support this motion from the member for Durham to proclaim the third week in May as Young Professionals Week. The proclamation is being made to "recognize and celebrate the vital role the young professional plays in our communities."

I'm eager to speak to recognize and celebrate the Brockville Young Professionals network in my riding. I can't say enough about this tremendous group of young people, who are indeed playing a vital part in the community. The organization was launched by the Brockville and District Chamber of Commerce seven years ago, and it was founded to get young people involved in the chamber. The young professionals network has grown into a strong organization on its own, with almost 200 members. That's a remarkable size for an organization, given the small size of the city of Brockville. But it's not the membership count that's most impressive; it's the commitment to building our community and making it the kind of place where young professionals want to start a business and raise a family. They've become an integral part of our local economic development efforts to attract and retain young people in Leeds-Grenville.

I've talked in this Legislature before about the showcase event the young professionals network created three years ago: the hockey Winter Classic Weekend. The annual event has now raised over \$130,000 for the Rotary Park revitalization and has become a major winter festival in our region. Last fall, the group held its first gala and presented Meg Plooy with the 2016 Young Professional of the Year award. Meg is the vice-chair of the network this year, and the board is chaired by another tremendous young professional in our community, Jessica Barabash.

1510

In addition to Jessica and Meg, I want to give a shout-out to one other person from the Brockville YPN, and that is Orlando Spicer. Orlando is also a board member

with the Young Professionals Network of Ontario, and his leadership role in this provincial organization is just another example of the outstanding impression the young professionals network in my riding is making.

Speaker, every generation wonders how the one that follows will take up the torch of leadership and do their part to build a brighter future. I know that I speak for all of Leeds-Grenville in expressing our great pride and confidence that with young professionals like these leading the way, our community's tomorrow is in very, very good hands.

I'm pleased to speak to this motion, I'm pleased to support the member for Durham, and I hope all members will support it unanimously.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): Further debate?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: As always, it's a pleasure to be able to stand in this House and speak to the legislation that is being brought forward. I wish to thank the honourable member for the resolution that we have the opportunity to debate today, and I wish to thank all the members who have added their strong voices to this debate, who have been able to contribute their thoughts, their perspectives, their own unique constituency's ideas about the need for young professionals.

It's an honour to be able to stand here as a young professional. Some might argue I chose a precarious line of employment, depending on who you talk to. Obviously that will stay in the hands of the voters of Niagara West-Glanbrook.

I do look forward to working to improve the lives of young professionals as well as all other members of my constituency, and really all the citizens of Niagara. This motion is very close to my heart, because it's actually speaking about something that is one of the big reasons I got involved in provincial politics in the first place and one of the big reasons I feel we have a huge duty in this House and a real opportunity here in the province of Ontario to make Ontario not simply a world-class place to live, to raise a family, to work and have a career, but really to make it a world leader when it comes to opportunities for young professionals and when it comes to opportunities for families, seniors and all Ontarians and everyone who comes to our great province.

I worked in federal politics for around a year before I entered the provincial sphere in a full-time sense, and I had the opportunity there to deal with some interesting situations and work with some interesting subject matter. I highly respect those who work in the federal area of jurisdiction and the excellent work that they do on the Canadian federal level. But there is something unique about the provincial level, because it has very much an impact. In this House, we have an impact on the day-to-day of people's lives in the way that, I would argue, federal Parliament doesn't necessarily have. The legislation we pass in this House impacts employment standards, it impacts housing standards, as we saw this morning with the passage of the government's legislation

there. It really has the opportunity to impact everything from the price of filling our gas tank in the morning to the calorie count that we see on our menus.

One of the big reasons that I got involved as a young person was that I have seen in Ontario—the Ontario I was born in, the Ontario I grew up in and understood to love—the economic powerhouse of a country that saw young people come out of university and able to get that first job, able to enter meaningful employment, to find a place that they could buy, that they could call their own, a place that they could raise a family in. That Ontario, unfortunately, has left. That Ontario has changed. That Ontario is not the Ontario we see today.

Unfortunately, today, in many of my peer circles, I have a lot of friends who are concerned about short-term contract work, who feel it is next to impossible when they come out of university with student debt to find that full-time employment that perhaps their parents' generation would have had the opportunity to do. Then, to compound matters, when they go out to find that first home, to find a property that they can own, that they can call their own and raise their family in, it's that much more difficult.

So, yes, I think we need to recognize the contributions young professionals are making across the province in a wide variety of sectors. They're really making a huge difference at every level not only in government, but within industry and in the cultural and social fabric of Ontario, really moving Ontario forward as a progressive province that recognizes the contributions of youth—not just youth but young professionals—in the development of our economy and the development of our social fabric here in the province of Ontario. But also, to see what we can do in this Legislature—this is a good time to think about what we can do to engage young people in a way that gives them a meaningful chance to obtain that first employment, to obtain that first job. Millennials are more prone to change careers than traditionally in the past. And millennials—the youngest working professionals—do have, sometimes, these issues that they are concerned about, coming out of university.

I'm very proud to be part of a party that recognizes the need to address a skills gap that we have here in the province of Ontario.

When it comes to young professionals, we do want to make sure we talk not only about those who perhaps work on Bay Street, perhaps work at Waterloo or those who may work in an office, but also we have to remember those young professionals who also work in these skilled trades, those who are doing very valuable work within construction, who are building our province up and who are making a very real, meaningful difference to the advancement of our province.

I am pleased to be able to stand and support the resolution that has been brought forward by the honourable member opposite and to thank him for his work in bringing acknowledgement to this place. I wish to thank all the members in this House for taking the time to listen to me this afternoon and to hear my contribution. I hope

that, as we go back to our ridings, we do everything we can to encourage more young professionals to get involved in every sphere.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): I now turn to the MPP for Durham for a final two-minute reply.

Mr. Granville Anderson: I would like to thank the members from Whitby–Oshawa, London West, Etobicoke Centre, Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, Kitchener–Waterloo, Leeds–Grenville and Niagara West–Glanbrook for their contributions to this motion in today's debate.

Young professionals deserve to be recognized for their contributions to their communities. This week-long movement will spark meaningful conversation about issues that matter to the under-40 demographic. Young Professionals Week will encourage local professionals to create and identify opportunities for professional and community development. In addition, it will educate employers on the importance of retaining young professionals and the crucial role they play in the workforce across this province.

As I travel this province, I am proud to see the contributions that our young people are making in the areas of politics, of business, of education and of agriculture. Their contribution is overwhelming. They're well-spoken, they're well versed on issues and they contribute to Ontario in so many different ways. It's so vital for our economy to grow and for our province to grow, and to have these young people excel and do well in all aspects of our society.

Again, Speaker, thank you so much for the opportunity. I thank this House for the opportunity to be able to speak to this motion. I thank my colleagues for their support of this motion here today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): We'll deal with this vote at the end of private members' public business.

PROTECTING VULNERABLE PERSONS IN SUPPORTIVE LIVING ACCOMMODATION ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 SUR LA PROTECTION DES PERSONNES VULNÉRABLES DANS LES LOGEMENTS SUPERVISÉS

Ms. Forster moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 135, An Act to establish a framework for the licensing of supportive living accommodation / Projet de loi 135, Loi établissant un cadre pour la délivrance de permis d'exploitation de logements supervisés.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

1520

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'm very proud to rise to speak on behalf of this private member's bill that I think is going to help a lot of vulnerable people in this province.

I'm going to start, though, with a local story. About a month ago, a gentleman by the name of Keith Charles

was sentenced to approximately a month in jail in London, Ontario, for over 12 fire code violations. Keith operated a home in the city of London called People Helping People. It looked like a group home, except that there were live-in adults and seniors who, for the most part, suffered from severe mental illness, health issues and physical disabilities. It was full of people and, according to reports from city officials, it was a ticking time bomb, a disaster waiting to happen.

Keith's operation of the home was, in fact, reported as minimal and, in the months leading up to the issues, the operation was racking up infractions from the local fire department: broken smoke detectors, emergency lights, clogged hallways and propped-open doors.

On November 3, 2014—ironically, the same day that fire officials were meeting to put a call in to the Ontario fire marshal's office to close the property because of the increasing number of complaints—the 911 call came in. The home was set ablaze, and it resulted in the tragic death of a 72-year-old man named David MacPherson. David's death was completely avoidable and preventable. It was a tragedy that highlighted the horrific conditions of some of these unregulated homes and the need for better regulation to protect the vulnerable residents who rely on them.

Because they're privately owned and operated and they're accountable to no one, they are free to operate their businesses however they please. It means they fall into a grey zone, and they're under enormous risk. The city of London has since put a bylaw in place. It was a positive step forward, but it doesn't do anything for the other 443 municipalities in this province who have no regulation whatsoever. That's why I've put forward the motion today.

About the bill: Basically, these homes provide low-rent accommodation to vulnerable tenants, who are considered high-needs a lot of the time. The shared accommodations typically can be room or room and board, with additional levels of support like food and meal prep, physical assistance, personal care, housekeeping and medication.

This bill just provides a framework for operators and sets minimum standards that must be met so that vulnerable tenants no longer suffer from a broken system. The bill defines what a home is, requires home operators to be licensed, similar to retirement homes—failure to have a licence is a punishable offence of up to \$1,000 a day—and would set a framework for inspection and complaint protocols.

I want to be clear: I'm not against these second-lodging or supportive living facilities, but I am against those which do not operate in a safe and respectful manner for the residents who live in them, because in many situations it's the only home that is available to them.

Starting in Welland under the leadership of a friend of mine and local city councillor, Bonnie Fokkens, who was also concerned about the deplorable state of some of the facilities that were in our city—she had a council motion

passed to actually ask the province to set up regulation around these types of accommodations. Through her work, 44 municipalities have supported that resolution and are asking the province to put some regulation in place.

Retirement homes were similarly regulated back in 2012. In that case, it included stuff like personal and financial histories of the operators, automatic sprinklers in the suites, staff training programs and patient care demands. Those kinds of situations were actually dealt with in regulation.

In Niagara, there are 19 individual homes that we know of. For the most part, they are operated by a man by the name of Vishal Chityal, who operates under the alias of Charlie Duke. I ask, why does somebody need to use an alias? He also owns properties in Hamilton and in London. He's no stranger to city officials—substandard conditions. His tenants are high-risk—they're usually on ODSP or social assistance; they often suffer from physical disability, mental health issues and have a strong dependency on operators—and Charlie Duke takes advantage. We get calls every day and complaints from them.

But I want to tell you about the culminating incident for me. It was with a different operator in the city of Welland. It was Thanksgiving, and I got a call from a worker at a place called Life Keepers, where there were 24 such residents. She asked me if I would come and visit these 24 people. There was no food in the facility. Some of the conditions were deplorable.

It was the Sunday before Thanksgiving. I put my turkey in the oven, I went off to a 90th birthday celebration for a woman in Thorold who had 50 or 60 people out celebrating her birthday, and on the way home I stopped at Life Keepers. I went into this place, and it was clean—as clean as it could be—but there was not a speck of food in this building on the Sunday before Thanksgiving. It was at that point that I said to myself, "We have to do something about this."

The building was owned by a local realtor, and he leased it to an operator. They had operated for about seven years. So we kind of started the ball rolling. But then, on February 1, the operator took cheques from these 24 people, so he probably collected \$20,000 to \$24,000. On February 5, he gave notice to the residents that he was closing his doors, that he could no longer operate. He did not give any of the money back to those people. The regional municipality and the social service agencies in the community were all just running to try to get these people a place. Some families took them home. Some people were sent to Charlie Duke, the first guy who I talked about, and others found their own accommodations.

The kicker for me, though, was that not only were these residents put at risk, but then, when I got to talk to the employees who were actually working for Life Keepers—I said, "Are you going to be able to collect unemployment?" "Oh, no." These people had been paid basically in cash; they might have gotten a cheque. They

had no CPP deductions. They had no EI deductions. They had no compensation deductions paid for them, and here they were: Today they had a job, and tomorrow they wouldn't have a job. They weren't even being paid minimum wage. Those are the conditions. And they were bringing food in when there was no food. They were bringing food from their own freezers to cook for these people who they were looking after.

So not only is it against the law not to pay income tax, but it's clearly against the Employment Standards Act, in every one of those breaches, not to contribute for those workers.

He—not Life Keepers, that I'm aware of, but Charlie Duke, the alias—was forcing clients to sign over trusteeship, so he was having municipalities send the cheques directly to him. There were people there who weren't just getting OW and ODSP; some of them were getting maybe \$1,500 or \$1,600 a month because they had worked in a job and had a bit of a pension. They were signing it over, and he was keeping all of their money.

In addition to this, this guy owns pharmacies in Mississauga and he owns a pharmacy in Hamilton. He was actually having those residents who lived in his building and stocked their prescriptions through their local pharmacies and directing their prescriptions through his pharmacies in Hamilton and Mississauga. He was denying families the right to actually come in and visit without notice, and the stories go on and on.

There are some positive examples. We have a wonderful place in Port Colborne, a small lodging home, a supportive living home called Grace's Victorian Seniors Lodging. A friend of mine's son, who at about 50 years of age was diagnosed with dementia, lived there for several years, until he could no longer be accommodated there and had to go into a nursing home. It's a lovely place: home-cooked meals, six or seven residents in the place, a lovely wraparound porch where people can sit outside in the summer and watch the boats go by on the canal—a place where you wouldn't mind having one of your family members actually live.

Not only are the operators a problem, but the stress that it causes on the other systems that we constantly find ourselves not having money for, like our hospitals, our home care system, our building code—our fire departments are constantly being called out to places.

1530

We don't know how many of these supportive living places actually exist in the province. But I was talking to the member from Parkdale-High Park, and she said she knows of situations here in the city of Toronto where people buy a house and fill it with people who have no other place to go—until, of course, they have some equity in their property, and then they turn around and they flip the property. Their mortgage is being paid. They're really not providing the services that they tell people that they're going to.

Unfortunately, it's because we don't necessarily have all of the supports in place that people need. Many of these people have multiple disabilities as well. They may

have physical disabilities; they may have substance-abuse issues. They may be seniors with a number of these problems.

I think it's so important that everyone in our community gets to live in a safe place with some dignity. I know that none of the members in this Legislature would ever put any of their family members or their friends into some of the facilities that I'm talking about today. I think that people who have been forced to live with these injustices—many of them for their entire life—or with these various illnesses or disabilities should not be further subjected to these types of accommodations.

As I said, there is no intent on my part to close down good operators. My total goal is to make sure that there is regulation in place to protect those vulnerable people in our society.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): I call now for further debate, turning to the MPP for Etobicoke-Lakeshore.

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: It's a pleasure to rise this afternoon to speak to Bill 135, the Protecting Vulnerable Persons in Supportive Living Accommodation Act. I want to congratulate the member from Welland for bringing forward this bill.

Certainly everyone in this Legislature wants to ensure that people have safe homes that they're living in, and if the person who owns the property is saying that they're providing them with services and support, that that can actually be enforced. We don't want to see anyone in this province being taken advantage of.

I know from my municipal experience that while there are licensed rooming houses and group homes which are properly regulated, there are also landlords who quite callously fill up their properties, whether it's with students or vulnerable people or seniors, simply to collect rent. Whether they claim that they're offering them some additional services or not, we know these facilities are often not well-maintained, that the living conditions in them are not very good, that they are overcrowded and that they are, in fact, often quite unsafe from the perspective of fire safety and security.

This bill is a very good initiative to ensure that there would be some kind of regulation—province-wide, potentially—to ensure that these people are protected in these homes. It's not about taking away the ability from anybody to set up this kind of housing. It's simply to ensure that the conditions within it would be regulated and that there would be an enforcement mechanism.

I know that our government is committed to ending chronic homelessness within the next decade, by 2025. We have made a number of investments towards good-quality supportive housing—investments that would fund over 4,200 supportive housing units that would, hopefully, in some cases, take away from the need for vulnerable people to turn to these off-market housing situations, which can be quite bad.

Our government is also increasing funding for supportive housing by an additional \$100 million beginning in 2019-20 on top of all of our previous investments. This

brings our investment in supportive housing up to \$200 million for housing allowances and support services to assist up to 6,000 families and individuals over the next three years. It's part of a long-term housing strategy that we've developed.

I certainly know from my experience at the municipal level that when a strategy is brought into place to help people who are homeless find a home with supports—because it's just not good enough to say, "Here is a room or an apartment" and leave them to their own devices if these are vulnerable people or people who need supports—those programs are incredibly successful and incredibly helpful programs to these people and, in many cases, truly help them turn their lives around. This piece of legislation could also assist with that, to ensure that these people are not being taken advantage of. That is certainly a goal we can all support.

I'm also quite happy to see in this bill that it's not meant to re-create licensing regimes which are already in place. Those types of homes that are already covered by other licensing regimes—municipal licensing—wouldn't be subject to a secondary regime. That's very good.

I do think that when this bill does make it to committee, there certainly are questions that need to be answered about what conditions the minister might impose on a licence, what the enforcement provisions would be and so on. We also have to be mindful that we should be encouraging our municipalities to actually allow for the proper licensing and zoning of more facilities and homes like these and not create barriers to creating this type of housing in various communities.

With that, I'll just conclude and say that I, and I believe many of my colleagues, will be supporting this bill. It's a good initiative. We have to protect the vulnerable in our society.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): For further debate, I now turn to the MPP for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a pleasure to speak to Bill 135, An Act to establish a framework for the licensing of supportive living accommodation. Supportive living accommodations, better known as group homes, are mostly unregulated in Ontario. Some municipalities regulate them, including Hamilton and London, but this bill would standardize the approach and make it province-wide.

Similar to long-term-care facilities, hospitals and retirement homes, all of which have to meet minimum standards, group homes, which are also transitional housing for our vulnerable people that operate under private arrangements, should be no different. They house vulnerable tenants who are battling mental health or addiction issues, developmental disabilities, people at risk of homelessness, survivors of domestic violence, at-risk youth and others who need our support.

Under Bill 135, a group home is defined as "a residential premise where four or more persons, who are not related to the operator, reside and receive assistance with the activities of daily living from, or as arranged by,

the operator." It's important to note that the proposed changes do not apply to the operators of a children's residence as licensed under the Child and Family Services Act, retirement or long-term-care homes, hospitals, or service agencies who provide residential services and supports to people with developmental disabilities.

I understand that a working group in the Niagara region looked at the issue and recommended some kind of a regulatory framework for assisted living, affordable housing and second-level lodging homes because of concerns over conditions in these facilities. We recognize that there are often fire issues. For example, in 2014, an elderly tenant died during a fire in a group home in London. The operator was subsequently jailed for fire code violations in the building.

What Bill 135 aims to do is require all home operators to be licensed and open to inspections to ensure better safety standards. It also proposes to punish offenders up to \$1,000 per day.

As I mentioned earlier, Hamilton was first to introduce bylaws to regulate these homes back in 1979, after a number of fires and deaths in the homes. The city's bylaw sets out the mandatory inspections by fire, building and public health departments, as well as requirements around supervision. Today, to the best of my knowledge, 22 municipalities have passed motions in support of streamlining standards across Ontario.

I believe what we need to do in cases of legislation is to make sure that there are standards so that, again, people can expect the same thing across all such institutions and facilities. What I think we also have to do, though, is make sure that we don't go overboard with the regulations, bureaucratic process and administration. What I never want to see is that we go so far on that side that we actually impact the support and the care at the front line to the people who we're trying to help. We need to make sure that we don't put so many stringent processes, particularly for our small ones.

1540

In rural Ontario, which I have the privilege to represent, a lot of the operators are very small or they're Community Living associations which again, are very strapped from a financial perspective in limitations from the government funding they receive, so I don't want to divert more of their time and energy into doing things like inspections—overboard. Again, there needs to be minimum standards. There needs to be a consistent standard across all.

The other thing I'd like to speak about in a couple of minutes while I'm doing this, and it's about these Community Living homes, is a big issue that I'm hearing, a little different from the bill—I'll talk to that briefly—and that's people, particularly aging children who are in those facilities currently. I'm hearing from a lot of parents who have been able to keep their children home with them and give them that loving support system, but they're often elderly. In some cases, they're a single parent. They're saying to me, "Bill, what happens to my daughter or my son when I die? Where are they going to

be? Are there enough facilities? Are there enough places so we can actually provide the services that my loved ones are going to need when I'm gone?"

That's something as well, and I know I've talked to the member about this to make sure that we understand what we're doing from that perspective and how we're going to help them. It's defraying a little bit from this bill, but I regard the member very highly. I know she does a great job and I applaud her for bringing this forward.

One of the things that we've talked about a little bit is "not as much detail," so we need to understand that. That's why I was talking, again, about the balance and not being overly administrative, and making sure that we have those standards, that we have—when you walk into a facility, when you're trying to find a facility, that you know that there are going to be those safety standards, those cleanliness standards, those typical daily hygiene and living standards that we all want to have.

I commend the member from Welland. I know from her nursing background, she always comes with passion to these things. I know that the intent of this bill is to ensure that we definitely put a framework in place that everyone understands, that it's manageable and it's not overburdening the operator.

The other thing that I think is nice to see is the fines piece. I believe what we need to do is go after the offenders. We don't always have to whitewash. Often what the government does is they take a problem and they whitewash everybody with the same brush, as opposed to saying that the offender did something wrong and they need to be penalized. I think that's where we have to put that focus. The good operators—let's raise them up. Let's use them as our guiding lights and our models, and go after the offenders that are not doing a good job, that are not ensuring that there are safety processes in place that are going to provide optimal living conditions.

I'm going to be splitting my time with my colleague from Dufferin—Caledon. Again, I want to support the member from Welland. I commend her for bringing this bill forward. I will be supporting it in the vote, and I applaud her very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): I now turn for further debate to the MPP for Hamilton Mountain.

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm pleased to rise today on behalf of the people of Hamilton Mountain to speak to this bill, the supportive living accommodation licensing act. I want to thank the member for Welland for bringing this bill forward because I know it's something that she cares deeply about, and she knows all too well that living conditions for vulnerable people in this province are a problem, and it's something that they have to endure, so I thank her greatly for bringing this bill forward.

What we're talking about is low-rent accommodations in privately owned rooming houses, boarding houses or lodges. The people who are in them would most likely be homeless if they were not there. Going home at the end of the day is something that most of us look forward to,

and we certainly take it for granted. But too many do not have that luxury. Those are the people who have nowhere to call home, nowhere to put their head down, nowhere to get a wash, nowhere to keep their belongings and themselves safe.

It is to our shame that homelessness is so prevalent all across Ontario, especially when it affects so many people living with disabilities—disabilities that often make it difficult to find work, that make them feel alienated and that expose their personal vulnerability.

It is impossible to talk about homelessness without talking about mental health because they are so closely connected. Delusional thinking can lead people with a mental illness to withdraw from friends and families. They don't have the resources to cope with things when they get bad. Many are released from hospitals or jail without proper community supports. It's difficult to get hard, reliable statistics, but it has been estimated that close to 50% of the homeless have a severe mental illness. According to the Homeless Hub, up to 75% of homeless women—75% of them—have a mental illness.

Those are startling numbers that demonstrate just how badly some Ontarians who are vulnerable are being let down. They don't just need a roof over their head; they need care and support to go along with their home. Some of those people will find a space in a rooming house or a boarding house. They might get lucky and it will be one that's clean and well-kept with attentive staff.

Others won't be so lucky. Perhaps a house littered with fire and safety hazards; maybe they'll have to share a room with four strangers with absolutely no privacy. Food is an unhealthy mix of whatever is available. This is meant to be transitional housing—a temporary measure to help people get on. It's supposed to be a temporary measure to get people back on track.

A non-threatening and supportive environment where people can get shelter and regular healthy food, as well as access to proper community supports, is an essential part of a person's road to recovery. Instead, poor conditions can make things worse for someone living with a mental illness. They can make a person withdraw into themselves even more. If they feel unsafe, some will decide that they prefer to stay on the street.

Supportive living accommodation addresses some of the problems created by a shortage of affordable housing and community mental health services. These are broader problems where the Liberal government has absolutely failed vulnerable people. But there is clearly a need for improvement and there are no minimum standards for private SLAs in Ontario.

This is why this bill is important and why I thank the member for Welland for bringing it forward to us today. With this bill, we can have those minimum standards, require operators of homes to be licensed and establish a framework for inspections and complaints. That, Speaker, is why this bill is a move in the right direction, and I'm pleased to be supporting this bill today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): I'll now turn for further debate.

I'd now invite the MPP for Dufferin—Caledon.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm going to break with tradition here because I am going to support Bill 135, and I'm going to tell you why. I, historically, traditionally, have a big problem with legislation that leaves a great deal up to regulation, and the member knows where I'm going with this. On the other hand, I have seen first-hand some of the challenges that our municipalities, our first responders, our firefighters and our police officers have with these basically unregulated boarding homes.

I will say that Bill 135 very specifically removes or exempts facilities that are frankly already regulated: a children's residence within the meaning of the Child and Family Services Act; a home for special care licensed under the Homes for Special Care Act; long-term care; private hospitals; retirement homes; supportive living facilities etc. So that part is good.

I think there has been a lot of focus on the debate talking about the vulnerable population, and without a doubt there are many individuals who are forced into a situation where this is their last resort. However, I will tell you that there are many examples within our student population, within our new workers—I have a family member who was lucky enough to secure a contract position, and in the city of Toronto this was what their option was. It was, Speaker, not a pleasant experience. There were a lot of issues—not very pleasant to go home at the end of a workday and essentially deal with challenges. We'll leave it at that.

We've had boarding homes since the city of Toronto was York. We have dealt with these situations, but I think it becomes a bigger issue when more and more people are accessing these homes. I know in my own situation in Dufferin—Caledon we've had some homes that have primarily been serving individuals who have mental health illnesses, dealing with schizophrenia, and they are living in these homes and the municipalities are very, very concerned; concerned about the welfare of the individuals who are living in these homes and the fact that there doesn't seem to be anyone who is overseeing and controlling.

1550

While Bill 135 does not have the detail and the specifics that perhaps I would be more comfortable supporting, I understand the intent of what the member from Welland is trying to accomplish, and I give her kudos for that.

It is an issue, and it's not just an issue for our vulnerable population. I want to reiterate that, because we have many, many students living in these types of residences. We have seniors who do not have access to long-term-care homes or can't afford a retirement home, who are living in these situations.

If we can, through Bill 135, motivate and encourage some action on this issue, I think that would be a move in the right direction, so I'm pleased to support it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): I thank the honourable member from Dufferin—Caledon, and now invite further debate from the MPP for Kitchener—Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'm pleased that we are debating this very important issue today, and I am thankful that the member from Welland has brought forward this piece of legislation, which will ensure that these homes are licensed, that there are some standards of care, that there are some levels of assurance around the safety of the occupants. I have to say that it will go a long way to addressing long-standing regulatory gaps, and improve the safeguards for residents of privately operated supportive living accommodations.

But we have to be honest: Why are we here? Why, in the province of Ontario, do we have some haphazard, frayed social safety net, when we knew—and we've known for a long time—that providing supportive, affordable, safe housing options was going to be needed because of the basic demographics of the province?

There is no long-term strategy around affordable housing in Ontario. That is why you have vulnerable people—you have seniors and individuals who have no other options—being taken advantage of.

This legislation that is currently on the books, which needs to be fixed by this bill, is permissive. This government has allowed this to occur in the province of Ontario, and there is no denying it. There is no defence of this government's record on the lack of supportive housing and affordable housing in the province of Ontario.

It's very akin, if you will, to what's happening in the unlicensed home daycares. In unlicensed home daycares, parents have no right to have any assurance as to whether or not the operator has had a criminal charge against them, or if the CAS has investigated. There is no assurance that there is needed basic first aid, to take care of young children.

You have these two ends of the spectrum. One is children with parents who have no options to find licensed child care, and even if they can find licensed child care, they certainly can't afford it. Then you have the other end of the spectrum, with an aging demographic, with a growing crisis in dementia, with very few options for any kind of housing, any kind of shelter.

I just want to do a shout-out: This is an issue in every single one of our ridings. Supportive Housing of Waterloo has been fighting tooth and nail at every level of government to get some sustainable funding, some partnership and some understanding.

"Research demonstrates adequate housing is the essential cornerstone of mental and physical health.

"Research also shows it is cheaper for governments to provide appropriate housing than to deal with the health and social services costs of those who are homeless or under-housed....

"One of the fastest-growing needs" in Waterloo region and across the province "is to find affordable housing for the homeless and seniors; the waiting list for affordable housing is close to three years for seniors" in this province.

What have you been doing for 14 years? It begs the question, Mr. Speaker.

"Estimates show that one quarter of Waterloo's population will be over 65 by 2020, with close to half of

that group having inadequate pension funds to cover shelter costs.”

This was an op-ed put out by Barb Wahl, who is on the board of directors for Supportive Housing of Waterloo. They are scraping together basic housing options.

There is a lack of leadership on this file. Without housing, the stability of the health care system and the justice system is obviously at risk. And seniors and our most vulnerable population have deserved so much better. Thankfully, though, we have a piece of legislation that can fix one gap, but a strategy is needed for Ontarians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): I thank the honourable member from Kitchener–Waterloo. I now call for further debate. Further debate? Seeing none, I’ll return the floor to the MPP for Welland for the final two-minute reply.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Shafiq Qaadri): I’m sorry; there is a—fair enough. I turn to the MPP for London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It is a pleasure for me to rise today, on behalf of the people I represent in London, to congratulate the member for Welland on Bill 135. I have to say, this is an issue that is very real for us in London.

The member for Welland, as she introduced her bill, shared the story of David MacPherson, a 72-year-old man, a father and a grandfather, who died in November 2014 while living in an unregulated group home—a home that was filthy; a home that was infested with cockroaches; a home that had very little food available to the residents; a home that had smoke detectors removed, doors unhinged, windows broken. David MacPherson was handing over his \$800-a-month disability cheque to the operator of this unregulated group home and getting nothing—substandard, deplorable housing—in return.

This private member’s bill is absolutely critical to ensure that there is that level of oversight that we would expect would exist in this province.

I have to say, at the time of David MacPherson’s death, I was not aware that there were no regulations governing this kind of accommodation.

In 1992, there was a commission of inquiry into unregulated residential accommodation that was led by social policy expert Ernie Lightman on behalf of the then NDP government. There were 148 recommendations that were made. Very, very few of those recommendations have since been acted upon.

At the time of David MacPherson’s death—I want to read a quote from some of the media coverage at the time. “When it became clear the province had washed its hands of the issue, with no plans to address the lack of supportive shelter for people with severe mental health and addiction issues, advocates such as London lawyer Jeff Schlemmer lobbied hard for the city to act, as other cities, including Hamilton, have done.”

This was in the vacuum that had been created by over two decades of inaction by successive Liberal and

Conservative governments. Nobody was doing anything to look after the most vulnerable among us—people like David MacPherson, who were living in these absolutely unacceptable, appalling conditions.

I congratulate the member for taking the initiative to put this oversight framework, this mechanism in place. I’m glad to hear the support, and I hope that this moves forward and actually becomes law. But what we will also be looking for from this government is assurance that there will be additional support available for care and treatment of the people who are living in these supportive housing units. More than accommodation, more than adequate food, people with serious mental health and addiction issues need care and treatment as well, and that will be a missing piece that will complement this legislation when it becomes law in the province of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the member from Welland to wrap up.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Thank you to all the members for weighing in on this bill.

I just wanted to get on the record some of the validators for this bill from my community. Shaun Baylis, CEO of Pathstone Mental Health, says, “Our vulnerable people are entitled to supportive living accommodations that will provide a reasonably healthy lifestyle that includes a place to live, quality food, and proper care.”

Lori Kleinsmith, health promoter at Bridges Community Health Centre, spoke to the legislation and talked about how the facilities are largely unregulated, with no standards in place as to the quality of care for the tenants. Regulation and oversight is required in order to ensure basic standards of care relating to quality of care, food, staff qualifications, treatment, services provided and the broader quality of life and well-being of tenants to ensure that those are met. So she supported this.

The deputy fire chief of Port Colborne said that they were in full support of the bill.

Justice Niagara, our community legal clinic, certainly weighed in at length with some remarks, but said that regulation and oversight is required to ensure basic standards of care, and provincial standards and regulations would be a positive step in all of our communities.

In my last minute, I just want to weigh in on the issues that some of the other members brought up with respect to treatment for mental health. I would say that in the absence of retirement home beds due to lack of income, in the absence of long-term-care beds and group home beds due to long wait-lists and affordable housing due to wait-lists and with reference to the lack of mental health services available in all of our communities across this province and the lack of investment that has been there over the years, I think we cannot bestow upon these people any more injustices in their daily lives, in the way they live day to day.

I thank everyone who supported the bill and look forward to its passing.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you.

Consideration of private members' public business has concluded before the expiry of the two and a half hours of time allotted, so this House is therefore suspended until 4:15 p.m. at which time I will be putting the question to the House.

The House suspended proceedings from 1601 to 1615.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

REGULATED HEALTH PROFESSIONS
AMENDMENT ACT
(FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE
IN HEALTH CARE), 2017
LOI DE 2017 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES PROFESSIONS DE LA SANTÉ
RÉGLEMENTÉES (LIBERTÉ
DE CONSCIENCE EN MATIÈRE
DE SOINS DE SANTÉ)

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): We will deal first with ballot item number 58, standing in the name of Mr. Yurek.

Mr. Yurek has moved second reading of Bill 129, An Act to amend the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 with respect to medical assistance in dying.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

We will deal with the vote at the end of all of the other votes.

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. Anderson has moved private member's notice of motion number 58.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear "carried."

Motion agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Congratulations.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Order. It's never too late to name anybody—and you know who you are.

PROTECTING VULNERABLE PERSONS
IN SUPPORTIVE LIVING
ACCOMMODATION ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 SUR LA PROTECTION
DES PERSONNES VULNÉRABLES
DANS LES LOGEMENTS SUPERVISÉS

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Ms. Forster has moved second reading of Bill 135, An Act to

establish a framework for the licensing of supportive living accommodation.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear "carried." Congratulations.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I need to turn to the member in terms of which committee.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Yes, general government, please.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Agreed? Agreed. Congratulations.

REGULATED HEALTH PROFESSIONS
AMENDMENT ACT
(FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE
IN HEALTH CARE), 2017

LOI DE 2017 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES PROFESSIONS DE LA SANTÉ
RÉGLEMENTÉES (LIBERTÉ
DE CONSCIENCE EN MATIÈRE
DE SOINS DE SANTÉ)

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1617 to 1622.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Pettapiece, Randy
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Michael	Scott, Laurie
Barrett, Toby	Jones, Sylvia	Thompson, Lisa M.
Brown, Patrick	MacLeod, Lisa	Walker, Bill
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Martow, Gila	Wilson, Jim
Clark, Steve	McNaughton, Monte	Yakabuski, John
Coe, Lorne	Nicholls, Rick	Yurek, Jeff
Fedeli, Victor	Oosterhoff, Sam	

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Ballard, Chris	Fife, Catherine	Matthews, Deborah
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McGarry, Kathryn
Bisson, Gilles	Forster, Cindy	McMahon, Eleanor
Chan, Michael	Fraser, John	Moridi, Reza
Colle, Mike	Hoggarth, Ann	Murray, Glen R.
Coteau, Michael	Hunter, Mitzie	Naqvi, Yasir
Damerla, Dipika	Jacsek, Helena	Potts, Arthur
Del Duca, Steven	Kiwala, Sophie	Qaadri, Shafiq
Delaney, Bob	Lalonde, Marie-France	Sousa, Charles
Des Rosiers, Nathalie	MacCharles, Tracy	Taylor, Monique
Dhillon, Vic	Malhi, Harinder	Thibault, Glenn
Dong, Han	Mangat, Amrit	Vanthof, John
Duguid, Brad	Martins, Cristina	Vernile, Daiene

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 23; the nays are 39.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading negated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I move that pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 68, An Act to amend various Acts in relation to municipalities, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, one hour of debate shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties; and

That, at the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That the vote on third reading may be deferred, pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The minister has moved government motion number 31. I'm going to return to the minister to begin this round of debate.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Thank you, Madam Speaker, but I have no remarks at this time.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'd like to say that I was pleased to rise today to speak to this motion, but I'm not. Just this morning, I spoke to another bill that was time-allocated. It seems the government has no interest in hearing from the people on any of their bills.

As you know, this is a municipal omnibus bill that impacts about 17 different pieces of legislation, from the Municipal Act, to the City of Toronto Act, to the Planning Act, to the Education Act, and yet the government is giving us a total of one hour of debate on third reading.

This is not the only part where the government has rushed this legislation through. Many people did not get an opportunity to share their concerns because, once again, the government pushed committee hearings through, with short notice and no travel.

We raised this concern about how short the notice was, but the government insisted it was sufficient. For the first day of public hearings, the people who were appearing received 24 hours' notice. In fact, the notice was so short that the Clerk wasn't able to fill two of the spots. It wasn't that people didn't want to come and speak to the committee, because the following week, 31 people and organizations applied for 18 spots. Almost half of the people who applied couldn't be heard by the committee.

That was just the people who applied before the deadline. We know that there were a number of organizations that missed the deadline, including the city of Mississauga. If the notice period was so short that the city of Mississauga, with all their staff, couldn't get in the request to speak on time, how did we expect smaller

municipalities would have been able to watch for the notice and apply in time?

The government tried to make special arrangements for the city of Mississauga to speak at the committee, but the NDP pointed out that it wasn't fair to make arrangements for just one group. It should make arrangements to add enough committee hearings for all of them to be heard. We would have been happy to participate in all of those hearings, to let everyone with concerns about Bill 68 have the opportunity to bring them forward.

I've said this before: A bill being rushed through committee is not a sign of efficiency. It is a sign of a government that is disorganized and can't manage their schedule. An organized government would work with the opposition to have multiple bills in committee, so that while the first bill is going through, they've already planned public hearings on the second and given people notice. That would allow the public hearings to be advertised properly, something that hasn't been happening recently.

A well-organized government would also make plans to take committee hearings to the people. One of the written presentations said, "I would like to apologize in advance for the organization and flow of this document. I have been afforded virtually no time to give it the due attention it deserves. One week ago this committee's work came to my attention, and my request to make an oral presentation went unacknowledged by the committee, and thus I have been forced to submit a less-than-perfect written presentation on this matter."

Clearly, there was a demand for more hearing time.

We heard a number of concerns from northern municipalities, so we proposed a committee meeting in the north during constituency week, to ensure that they had a chance to share their concerns on this bill. Holding public meetings in the north during constituency week would not have delayed the bill by even a single day. But the government members on the committee still refused to take even a single day to travel to the north and listen to those municipalities.

1630

We recognize that municipalities in the north have unique challenges and we wanted to go directly to them to hear about how this bill would impact them, but the government refused. It's not enough to say you care about the north; you have to be willing to go there to hear from them.

Madam Speaker, in spite of the short notice and the fact that the committee never left Toronto, a lot of presenters came to talk about intended consequences and the impacts of the bill that the government hadn't thought through. It's easy for someone sitting in an office tower in downtown Toronto to write out a new bill, but it is municipalities, organizations, businesses and individuals that need to deal with the impact of that new legislation. It is municipalities that have to bear the cost of implementing those proposals. It is small businesses that now have their rental income from billboards put at risk.

I want to point out that not all of the comments were technical. There were also a number of people who came

to say how disappointed they were with what the government had not addressed in this bill. One presenter said during committee, "We had invested a considerable amount of work advocating for reform of the Municipal Act, and largely on the basis of what we saw there, we felt that this proposal actually fell somewhat flat."

He went on to say, "What we saw—or what we didn't see, rather—in the legislation was any ambition. We didn't see any alignment between what had been speaking points tossed at municipalities for a long time, speaking points that I would contend have accelerated in recent years."

Municipalities are tired of speaking points. They're tired of a government that says they will cut red tape and then adds additional burdens in every piece of legislation they introduce. They're tired of a government that says it respects them and then cuts or merges programs they depend on, with no consultation. They're tired of a government that makes announcements with great fanfare and then fails to deliver.

In fact, while he was questioning one of the presenters, a government member on the committee said, "[H]ow do I tell someone like the councillors—and I have eight municipalities in my riding—they think we're going the wrong way with this piece of legislation."

Madam Speaker, the public hearings were not the only part of this process where the government didn't leave sufficient time. The deadline for amendments was so short that every single party submitted amendments after the deadline. In fact, I believe we were the only party that filed the majority of our amendments on time.

As I explained at committee, by the deadline there were 50 pages of amendments, which we received at 2:48 p.m. on Tuesday. That was the package of amendments as of the deadline. By Tuesday night, there were 89 pages; Wednesday, there were 123 pages. On Thursday, there were 125. Then, when Friday came, there were 131 pages, which included two amendments that I apologize for because they were from the PC caucus.

The deadline was so tight that legislative counsel didn't have time to properly proof or edit the amendments for the different parties before they were submitted, so we ended up with two or three versions of the same amendment, which added to the difficulty of the clause-by-clause.

I want to thank the legislative counsel for their work on our amendments. I know that the lawyer who drafted our amendments worked during Easter weekend to get them completed for the government's deadline, and I appreciate that. We are lucky to have a very professional legislative counsel team that works hard to ensure we have amendments by the deadlines, but these tight timelines are unfair to them and don't result in better legislation.

Earlier this week, we had clause-by-clause on Bill 124. The deadline for amendments was less than 24 hours after the public hearings ended, and only eight and a half hours after we received some of the written submissions—eight and a half hours, Madam Speaker. It

just wasn't possible to draft amendments in response to some of the concerns that were raised.

Having amendments filed late or having drafting errors that need to be corrected later makes clause-by-clause difficult for everyone and leads to mistakes. If you want to make legislation better, we need to take the time to do it right. Yet the government is putting time allocation on another bill.

When we rush, we end up with mistakes like the one that had to be corrected in this bill, where the government had moved one date without changing another, so we were going to have the new term of council overlapping with the old term of council for two weeks. Cities would have had two mayors at the same time.

As the submission from the Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario on this bill said, "As with Bill 130 and Bill 8 before it, some of the measures in Bill 68 seem to have been motivated by bad headlines and anecdotes, rather than extensive information and detailed analysis. The consequences for municipalities are nevertheless significant."

Madam Speaker, I want to make the legislation better. We put forward just over 30 amendments, and all of them would have made the bill better, yet the government voted them all down—every single one of them. What is interesting is that after we submitted our amendments by the deadline, the government then filed amendments on many of the same topics, just with slightly different wording. It seems they liked some of our ideas, but not the idea of actually passing amendments put forward by the opposition. On those I will just point out that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

However, what is more concerning is the amendments we put forward which would have made the bill better which the government didn't copy. Those amendments would have removed vagueness, protected property owners and given councillors longer parental leave. As I said, the government voted down every single opposition amendment, and often it seemed that the party who introduced them was the only reason they were voting them down.

Madam Speaker, I had a one-hour speech on this bill written for Tuesday night, when it was supposed to be debated, and I can assure you some of this is there. Instead, at the last minute, with no notice, the government cancelled the night sitting, and instead yesterday moved this time allocation motion. My speech went through some of the amendments and why we put them forward, and the support from different stakeholders each of them had. Since we won't have that time to explain them all in third reading, I want to take a few minutes to go through some of them now in this time allocation motion.

For instance, we put forward amendments to extend the parental leave for municipal councillors and school trustees from the 20 weeks that were currently proposed in the bill to 24 weeks—almost six months—to give new parents a little more flexibility. Yet the government members voted against them.

The second amendment was literally just to change the number of weeks of parental leave for school trustees. It

would not have changed a single word other than the number of weeks, so it was clearly lengthening the leave that they objected to. When we asked in the ministry briefing why they had chosen 20 weeks, they said simply that it was the number that had been in the private member's bill. There was no other reason for choosing 20 weeks, and yet they refused to extend it. I want to give that member credit for raising the issue, but I am amazed that all the government members voted against lengthening the leave for new parents—twice.

They also voted down our amendment to require municipal councillors to attend meetings in person instead of simply phoning in. What is really ironic is that the government put forward a motion prohibiting councillors from calling in to closed meetings, because they didn't trust them to ensure that they were calling from a secure line without people around. As one of the government members of the committee said, "There's something in my gut about in camera meetings and people phoning in from the cottage. They may be on the beach; they've probably got their cellphone on because they're having trouble hearing, with all the noise around them, the conversation."

I heard the comment from a mayor at ROMA that this amendment would mean that one of their councillors would go south for the winter and would no longer fly back home for the meetings. Most councillors are very responsible and want to represent their constituents in person, but I don't think we should be setting up a system where someone can call in from the cottage, the beach or even another country, instead of being there in person where they can be held to account.

This experiment has already been tried. Port Moody in British Columbia had to rescind their municipal bylaw allowing electronic participation in council meetings after two different councillors tried it on separate occasions and both times had technical difficulties. The council considered spending \$45,000 to upgrade their teleconferencing abilities, which resulted in outrage with their residents. As one letter to the editor said, "I was outraged to learn of Port Moody council's experiment with councillors 'attending' council meetings by Skype. Why?" They went on to say, "Face-to-face interaction is crucial."

When another BC municipality considered it, the public showed up to complain. One person said, "You really haven't improved things. You're making it worse. Now you can elect a council that never shows up to meetings."

You see the technology challenges in the minutes of other municipalities where this is allowed, such as: "At 3:16 p.m., councillor's Skype call ends. At 3:20 p.m., councillor called back into the meeting via Skype." Clearly there are still issues with technology. The minutes of these meetings also show that often it is the mayor who calls in to the meeting. Imagine the challenges that creates.

1640

Electronic participation became an issue in another municipality in 2014 when a councillor who was also a

professional actor took on an acting role which involved a 17-week world tour. As one of the critics said, "People want their representative to be here—in person."

It also became an issue recently in the municipality of Peachland, British Columbia. A councillor said, "If you're going to run for an elected position and you want to be away for four or six months at a time, that's fine, but don't say you're available. If you're away, you're really not available to residents."

In Lantzville, when they considered the idea, a councillor said, "Certainly in my experience, I've sat in meetings where members of the assembly have called because they are away and they want to take part in the meeting and it can be problematic because depending on where you are, calls get dropped, connections get severed, and basically once that has happened that person has just left the room and it is difficult for the individual, sometimes, on their end to follow what's going on." That means councillors aren't hearing the full debate and getting the full information, but are still able to make decisions.

It also makes it difficult to hold them to account. In his written submission to the committee, Paul Dubé, the Ombudsman of Ontario, said, "I understand the policy reasons why official 'meetings' would be restricted to situations where the requisite number of members is physically present. This requirement reinforces that the public is entitled to attend municipal meetings and witness democratic decision-making in process."

Madam Speaker, we cannot support a bill that reduces accountability and transparency by allowing councillors to call in to meetings instead of being accountable to their constituents in person. We put forward two amendments to remove this ability from the bill, and the government members voted them both down. This government may be in favour of reducing debate, they may be in favour of reducing transparency and think that politicians don't need to be accountable to their constituents, but we strongly disagree. We're all required to show up to participate, and we do, even if it means staying until midnight; the same with the federal government. Municipalities are a mature order of government. We believe they should be held to the same standard of accountability and transparency.

It seems like every day this government rushes through another bill without proper consultation or debate. During the debate on time allocation on another bill, the Minister of Housing accused me of filibustering, which makes me think that he wasn't watching the committee. This bill has four schedules impacting 17 different pieces of legislation. There are 84 sections in the first schedule, and 70 in the second schedule. As WeirFoulds said in their review, this act "could have a significant impact on how municipalities and their councils function." There were over 130 pages of amendments to multiple bills, some of which had the same intent but accomplished it in very different ways, which means that it was up to the committee to decide which amendment was more appropriate. We took those decisions rather seriously, Madam Speaker.

Many of the sections of the bill and amendments had questions which required legal opinions, such as the debate over whether an integrity commissioner is an employee of the municipality or an officer. It may seem like a small detail, but it is the difference between that integrity commissioner being at risk of personal lawsuits just for doing their job or being protected. There was a debate about whether a judge's code-of-conduct ruling could come down during an election. The parliamentary assistant thought that the judge was prevented from ruling during that time period, but when we checked with the legal counsel, in fact, they are allowed to rule during the election.

If the government thinks that asking those questions is filibustering, then they really don't understand the role of MPPs. It's our job to read the bill, to research it, to hear from the experts and the people in the sector, to bring forward amendments based on the problems we've found and what we've heard, and to explain to the committee why those amendments are needed. It's our job to listen to the debate in the committee and to decide whether the amendments will make the bill better, not just read what is on the page in front of us and ignore the fact that it is not our job to rubber-stamp legislation. It is our job to debate legislation.

There were a number of problems with this bill. For instance, the government had added parental leave for municipal councillors but had totally forgotten school board trustees. Mistakes like that are why it is important to hear from the people impacted and have an opportunity to amend the legislation to make it better.

I also want to point out that, in spite of the government members complaining about how long this bill was in committee, the government House leader chose not to even call the bill for debate last week or this week until Thursday afternoon. Then they time-allocated it. I don't understand why this government is afraid of debating their bills, or it simply doesn't care about the democratic process. Either way, this isn't the government that the people of Ontario voted for. It isn't the government that claimed that they wanted to have conversations and, certainly, it isn't a government to be proud of.

I oppose this time allocation motion, and I thank you very much for the opportunity to speak.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm going to say right from the get-go that I'm not happy to be debating this time allocation motion. I think that the government would be well-advised to do what we used to do around this place for many a year, which is the government would sit down with the two opposition House leaders, work out an agreement on what could be passed through the House fairly quickly and what stuff needs a bit more time for public debate in the House and for public hearings in committee to be able to get through its business in the way that, quite frankly, the parliamentary system was designed to do.

What we now have is that we have a government that is time-allocating everything at third reading. We've got

about four or five time allocation motions at this point to try to truncate third reading. The reason that we have those is a failure on the part of the government and the government House leader's team to actually work out some sort of an agreement that would allow us to be able to move forward, as a House, on the bills that are before us in a way that makes sense to the public of Ontario.

This House is not just my House and your House and that of all of the members of this assembly; this House is the House of the people. The public has the right to understand, if there are bills in the House that may be well-intended but controversial, that there be a regular debate where people have an opportunity to express their thoughts on the bill here, and that we make some sort of an agreement about, "Okay, maybe we don't have to have X number of hours of debate at second reading in exchange for more time in committee, so that the public can have their say." Wouldn't that seem to me to be a better thing to do?

What you've now got is that you have a government that says, "Well, we have time allocation rules that say after six and a half hours of debate at second reading, the government can move a time allocation motion. We can have a two-hour debate"—a time allocation debate, as we're having now—"the government then can time-allocate the debate for one day of hearings in committee"—which is often the case; one, sometimes two days—"and then bring it back into the House for third reading with one hour of debate."

How does that help the public? How does that give the public any kind of reassurance that the legislative process that we have here includes them in the decision-making? The British parliamentary system was developed in a manner that gave not only legislators an opportunity to have their say, but gave the public the chance to have their say. That's what the committee process is all about.

It just seems to me that if I was the government House leader or the Premier, I would come from the perspective of saying, "All right, I enter into a fall or spring session. Here are the things that I would like to get done, that are part of my agenda as a government." Every government has a right to move forward their agenda. The opposition understands that, at the end of the day, the government has to have the ability to pass their agenda because they are the government. They were elected by the people. But the opposition and the public have an opportunity to have their say. If that takes three or four or five days of committee hearings somewhere in Ontario, so that people who are concerned are able to have their say, what's wrong with that? Isn't that what this place should be all about?

I want to give you one little example of what the effect of this is in a practical way. I just got notification on today about another bill we had in this House not too long ago, and it's related to time allocation.

Rightfully so, the government has put forward a bill that's going to create one or two ridings from the northern ridings of Kenora-Rainy River and Timmins-James Bay. I support that. I think it's a good idea. It gives

northern communities and the James Bay and the Far North, where 99% of the people there are First Nations—Cree, Ojibway-Cree—an opportunity to be able to decide for themselves who it is that they want from their own people to represent them here in the Legislature. Bravo. I think it's a really good initiative on the part of the government and it would mean, if done, we would actually have in this Legislature in the next session two members from the Far North from First Nations communities speaking on behalf of those communities here in this Legislature. I think that's great. That's why we supported this at second reading.

1650

The government created a committee in order to have the committee consult people in northern Ontario in the affected ridings about what we are going to do about creating these, what the decision will be. Will there be one riding or will there be two? What will be the boundaries? What is the budget necessary for the members to be able to service those constituencies—all of those nuts-and-bolts issues.

I get notification by email today from the commission that they are having a consultation, Madam Speaker, and the consultation is going to be during constituency week in Toronto, when both myself and Sarah Campbell, the member for Kenora-Rainy River, are going to be doing what? I'm travelling twice to Kapuskasing next week. I'm going to Connaught, I'm going to Timmins, I'm going to Hearst and I'm going to Moosonee. How am I going to find the time to get down to Toronto to do a consultation on the creation of these new ridings when I'm in my constituency trying to serve the constituents?

You would think that the commission would say, "Let's look at the parliamentary calendar," and either go meet with the members—because they're required by legislation to meet with the MPPs currently representing those ridings. You'd think they would have said, "Let's set up an agenda that works for the members to be able to get their input." No. Instead, I can't attend this meeting on May 25. I'm going to be in Kapuskasing on that day, as you, Madam Speaker, will be somewhere in your constituency. That's why you have to have a process of consultation in committee where the public really can have their say.

I think the failure of time allocation is it gives short shrift to the ability for the public to come in and say, "What does this bill mean for me? I am the person who's going to be affected by the legislation," be it whatever it is. The public that's going to be affected by the legislation should have an ability to come before committee and tell the committee what it thinks and how the bill is good or bad and how it could be improved.

When I was first elected here—I'm sorry; I have a bit of a cold. Mr. Bradley has been here a lot longer than me. He's been here 40 years; I've only been here just close to 30. But the point is, when I got here, there were no time allocation rules, and committees used to travel. The agenda of a government normally was—under the Liberals under Peterson, or under Mr. Davis or Mr. Rae,

the process was that the government decided what its agenda was. They brought that agenda to the House leaders' meetings at the beginning of the session, prior to the session, to figure out how they were going to move all this forward, and we would decide which debates we had to have more time on, because the opposition is not opposed to every bill that the government brings forward. In fact, if you look at the order paper, both opposition parties have voted for about 80% of the bills that the government has brought forward—with some amendment, but 80% of them have been passed and they've been supported.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: Because they're so good.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm not saying they're bad. Which government does everything bad? Come on. My point is, there are some bills that we can spend more time on and some bills we need to spend less time on in order to give members the opportunity to have their say but, more importantly, to give the committee the opportunity to travel the bill to the community of interest.

So, for example, as I said on this last bill that we just dealt with, the creation of the northern communities, there should have been, when we created that legislation, a process in the committee where we actually went into maybe Moosonee or Attawapiskat or Pikangikum, or some community that is going to be affected, and the people there could come in and say what they have to say. Invite NAN—Nishnawbe Aski Nation—and Matawa and MoCreebec and Mushkegowuk Council, those people, to have their say. They would have said to you, "If you're going to do a consultation, please be aware what the limitations on consultation are when the commission that has just been formed goes out and does its work," because I don't think anybody on the James Bay or in northwestern Ontario is opposed to that legislation. I think most people would be in support, as I am and as Sarah Campbell is. But you've got to make it work. So we're not going to be taking into account some of the very practical things that people in that northern part of the province are going to tell you.

For example, if you're the newly elected member from one of those big ridings in northern Ontario—that's going to be eastern northern Ontario, Far North Ontario and western Far North Ontario—you're going to be electing people from those communities. The expectations on the part of the community members are going to be much greater because their own community members are the ones who are going to be elected.

Where do you put a constituency office when your riding is Moosonee, Moose Factory, MoCreebec, Attawapiskat, Fort Albany, Peawanuck, Marten Falls, Webequie and any place in between? No matter where you put the constituency office, nobody can walk to the constituency office to get service, because they're all fly-in communities.

So I guess you're going to have to have a bigger communications budget, to allow people to be able to phone, email and contact the constituency office, wherever that might be. You're going to have to have different

staffing arrangements, because you're going to have to have people in at least some of those communities to represent the member, to make sure that the issues of those communities are being heard. So they're going to probably need a different staffing allotment.

Certainly the travel budget is going to have to be different. I've got an airplane. By the way, I'm just about to get my licence back. After going through the procedure of angioplasty and all that, I went through this whole process in order to get my medical. I passed my medical. Woohoo! I'm so excited. So I get my licence back. Of course, Transport Canada was going to accept the report from the cardiologist and others. But my point is, you shouldn't have to buy an airplane and learn how to fly it to service your riding. Right? It doesn't make any sense to me.

My point in this time allocation debate is that we time-allocate these items and we give short shrift to some very practical issues that have to be dealt with. In the case of northern members being elected in these new ridings, we're going to have to give them transportation budgets that we don't currently have.

I get, and Sarah Campbell gets, four travel points a year to travel to the northern part of our riding. The rest of it I do with my airplane. And guess what? I lose money every time I take it out. That thing costs me \$5,000 a year, plus about \$11,000 a year out of my pocket, before I ever expense one kilometre. And the kilometres that I charge are like I would be driving in my car. I just want to point out that it costs a lot more money to fly an airplane than it does to drive a car. Well, that's my choice. I don't expect anybody else to have to do that.

But my point is, we're not taking any of this into consequence when we're making our decisions. If we had a proper legislative process that would afford us the opportunity to allow committee structures to work so that the committees can actually do the work that needs to be done to properly consult the public affected, we might have been able to deal with some of this stuff ahead of time.

Maybe we couldn't travel to all of the northern communities as a committee. Maybe we could have only travelled to three or four of them. But at the very least, those people who are super interested might have been able to participate by flying them down. I remember when I was in committee back when I was first elected here, back in the NDP government—and even under the Tories; when they first got elected, they did the same, and the Liberals before that certainly did the same. You would say, "Well, if our committee is not going to your community and you're really interested, you can come to Toronto," and the committees used to vote in order to cover people's travel. Why? Because it was important to hear from them.

But now we short-shrift in time allocation motions: one day of hearings—two days of hearings if we're lucky—in Toronto, and there's no thought given to anybody else who lives outside of Toronto, about how they might be able to participate in committee in order to

give thoughts on the bill. I just think that's a disservice to the public, and I think the government is selling itself short. Because what I've seen on committee, and the member for—Mr. Hardeman, Ernie—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Oxford.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oxford, thank you. John's uncle.

Miss Monique Taylor: Uncle Ernie.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Uncle Ernie, as we call him. As he pointed out, there are people who came before the committee who actually made some presentations about issues that were important that should have been taken into consequence.

It used to be, before time allocation—my point is this—that those people would come before committee. There was no time allocation, so the government had to get the bill through. In order not to get the bill stuck in committee and to allow the bill to go forward, guess what? There had to be a little bit of trading. The opposition and the public maybe had amendments that they wanted. The government would say, "Okay, which ones can we live with?" and the government would then make amendments in exchange. "Okay, will you agree, if we do X number of amendments and these amendments are done, that you're going to allow this bill to come out of committee?" It was a negotiation. But how is that a bad thing?

1700

Miss Monique Taylor: It's not.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It's not a bad thing.

I think of the work that we have to do for kids across this province when it comes to being able to access service. We've had bills that have gone into committee where the government has used its majority and used time allocation in order to short-shrift the entire process.

The sad part is—are the members of the opposition trying to just thwart the government? No. We're like every other member in this place. We want to represent our constituents. We want to make sure that at the end, whatever the government does actually works and that we can better the situation for individual lives.

Guess what? I will argue that individual government members are the same. I don't think any of the members individually on the government side of the House feel any differently than we do in the opposition when it comes to doing what's right for their constituents.

But the problem they have is the problem we have, which is that the Premier's office and the government House leader's office control the process. And who controls it? It's not even the members. It's those staffers in the back, on those benches over there, and their bosses. No, seriously. You've got a whole bunch of people who aren't elected, who are making decisions about stuff that's going to affect people, and it's based on who works for whom in the Premier's office, and who works for whom in the House leader's office and the minister's office. It's not even the members.

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I was going to say that, but I didn't want to go there.

But my point is, in this place the members used to be the ones who made these decisions—not about what goes in the legislation right away and how the bill is drafted, but there was a committee process by which the members were able to say, “Mr. and Mrs. Public, what do you have to say about this bill? What suggestions do you have to make it stronger?” Then we would try to be able to do some amendments.

I’ll give you an example. When we were government, we created what was called the sustainable forestry development act. Prior to that, Ontario had a system that left a lot to be desired when it came to forestry. We did not do a good job of planning forestry and cutting trees in a sustainable way. We were good, but we weren’t great. We also had a system that was somewhat subsidized.

So we decided, back in the early 1990s—because we saw where we were going with free trade—that we had to make sure that we set up our industry not to be seen as being subsidized, and that it would be more sustainable and that it would be greener. That was the whole idea. Sustainable forestry development was to make the industry sustainable, from an environmental point of view, but also to stand the test of time when it came to American trade issues.

The point is, we went into committee thinking, as government—and I was there; I was on that committee—that we had all the answers in the first draft of the bill. But the process—we had no time allocation—forced us to go out. I think we did three—I can’t remember. I’m looking at some of the Clerks. Maybe they have the answer for me. We had at least four weeks of travel on the road, three to four weeks, where we travelled to communities across northern Ontario and any other community in central Ontario that was affected by forestry.

I remember the brand new member from Victoria—Haliburton, Mr. Hodgson, who is now the head of the Ontario Mining Association. He was the brand new member for the Conservatives on that committee. I don’t remember who the Liberal was; it just escapes me at this point. But the point is, Mr. Hodgson came in as a brand new member and took this committee process really seriously. He did his job as a member by really trying to understand what the presenters were saying, and what the issues were, and how the bill could be improved. Mr. Hodgson, along with the Liberal critics—I forget who they were—brought forward a number of amendments to the bill.

Guess what? As a government, we couldn’t pass the bill without the support of the opposition. We couldn’t get it out of committee. How were you going to get the bill out of committee if the committee continued to move amendments and do whatever, as a committee? Even though we had a majority, the opposition, who were in the minority, had the ability to hold up the bill, given the parliamentary system we operate in. So we had to give amendments.

I remember at the time, being a brand new NDP member—like, I was smarter than all of the other people, just like the Liberals were, and like you guys were when

you were government—“Who are they to obstruct us? We got elected; we have a majority; we should be able to do what we want.”

We ended up amending the bill. Guess what? Twenty-five years later, that bill stands the test of time. There have been Conservative governments for two terms, and there have been Liberal governments now for four terms since that bill was passed in this House, and we have not amended the gist of what that bill was all about. We changed some stuff on the allocation system; that’s for another debate.

But the point is, the amendments strengthened the bill. The amendments allowed the bill to be a better bill that functions 25 years later in a way that it would not have functioned if we had not amended the bill. If it hadn’t been for the opposition members—I say this as the guy who was the government member on that committee—and the public coming forward and the forest companies coming forward, the unions and everybody else who gave us advice, we would have never amended that bill in the way that it was finally done in its final form. But as a result, we did a bill that works. We now have a system in Ontario where we are able to plan, we are able to harvest, and we are able to replant in the forest in a way that we never could before. It is sustainable. It has served industry well. It has served the environment well, and it has saved our trade issues well, as well.

When the government says time allocation is a necessary tool for us to get our business through, I say, “Hogwash.” If the government really wanted to make this place work in the way that it’s designed to—you’ve got to remember that Parliament was designed over a period of hundreds of years. The whole idea of Parliament is that the government at the end must have an ability to pass its agenda, but that the opposition also has a role to point out the weaknesses in the agenda and to try to strengthen them. If we’re just doing hyperbole and it’s not good amendments and it’s just politics, then the government can do what it wants. But in the end, the system has worked well.

Another great example is what happened with the public health care system. When Tommy Douglas did public health care in Saskatchewan, do you think that the Liberals and Conservatives were in favour over there? Absolutely not. But what’s happened is, we ended up, as a result of the process, developing a public health care system that was then adopted by every province in this country and adopted by the Canada Health Act federally under, I believe, Mr. Pearson, at the time—a Liberal Prime Minister.

Guess what? There is not a political party in Canada today—other than the Libertarians—not a major political party, Liberal, NDP or Conservative, that will ever campaign against public health care. We look at the American debate, and we say, “Are you guys serious over there? You think that you’ve got a good system? You have no idea what you’ve got.” I’ll give you a story—two stories.

One is that a good friend of mine went to Florida, as they do every winter, to winter, and unfortunately he got

a really bad sort of lung condition that gave him really bad pneumonia. He was actually very critical; he could have died, it was that bad. He ended up in a hospital in Florida for 10 days. After 10 days, three days in ICU and his time in the hospital—and I'm not going to use their names because it would be unfair—when they came out of the hospital—his wife was calling me throughout this because I know them quite well: “Oh, my God. I don't know if he's going to make it.” Thank God, he did. He's doing fine today.

But she gave me a call, and I said, “Do me a favour. When you check out of the hospital and the insurance pays the bill and you've got to sign, give me a copy of the bill. I want to see it.” How much do you think 10 days of hospital stay in Florida was?

Hon. Jeff Leal: Was it \$100,000?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It was \$167,000. I took the bill and I sent it to the Timmins and District Hospital, and I said, “Blaise”—Blaise MacNeil runs our hospital; he's the head administrator at the hospital—“how much would this cost in Ontario?” Take a guess. It's \$27,000. In Ontario, we're able to treat the same patient with the same, or better, level of care for \$27,000, versus \$167,000 in Florida.

Guess what? It gets worse. That didn't include the doctors' fees. The doctors' fees are on top of it. In the \$27,000 in the Ontario system, it includes all of it. So why is it so successful? It's because all of us have a hand in it. Everybody in the political system we have: New Democrats—CCF, initially—Liberals after and Conservatives after that have worked to make a better health care system in the British parliamentary system. We've been able to do that because of a very strong committee process that allows committees to do what they're intended to do, which is to consult with those people affected and those people who are experts, so that we can design a system.

1710

As a result of that, we have a health care system that, at this point, I don't see any political party wanting to undo. Yes, there are levels of privatization, and we can get into that whole debate. But my point is, the basic tenet of public health care is maintained.

I'm looking at my whip, if he wants some time.

Mr. John Vanthof: You're just in mid-flight.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm in mid-flight. Zulu Yankee Victor, Toronto and Buttonville—here we go.

My point is, it has stood the test of time.

I'm giving this talk because it really bothers me. For those who lived through the system when there was—I think there are only about five of us who were here before there was time allocation. There is Mr. Arnott, Mr. Wilson, myself, Jim Bradley and Mr. Kwinter. We're the only ones who were here prior to time allocation. We're the only ones who were here when we used to have Committee of the Whole. We used to do most of our business in committee, or Committee of the Whole, for a reason. We didn't use the House for second and third reading the way we do now. Time allocation, I believe,

has really weakened the legislative process such that we do a much worse job than we used to under the old system.

I'd just urge the government—again, this is my plea every time we get into time allocation debate. Listen, you're not serving yourselves well, and you're selling yourselves and the public short, by utilizing time allocation.

I'm going to be the first to admit that every party has used it. I'm not going to sit here and cast a rock in your pond and say, “Oh, we're purer than that,” because we did. We were at the beginning of all of this. The Tories accelerated it and you accelerated it as well.

But I think, in the end, we have done a disservice, all of us, to what Parliament is all about. Parliament is about a government that gets a majority and has the right and the obligation to lead and to do what has to be done. But they must take into consequence what the public and the opposition have to say, in order to strengthen what it is they do.

If you look at all of the political systems that we have in the world, the elected systems that we have—as Winston Churchill said, this is the best of the worst systems that are out there. I certainly favour it over what I'm seeing in the US these days. My God. I looked at CNN last night at 2 o'clock, and I went, “Jeez, is that really going on over there?”

My point is, we should at one point start rethinking how we run this place and actually give committees the power they need to do their work, because I think, at the end of the day, that serves everybody better.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to rise and speak about the Liberal government's time allocation motion on Bill 68, Modernizing Ontario's Municipal Legislation Act, 2017.

We've seen over the course of this government's tenure how often they have opted to use time allocation to stifle debate and ram through their political agenda. But what is also clear in that process is that this Legislature has developed a transparent process where legislation is introduced, debated, sent to a standing committee for recommendations or amendments, and then voted on by the members of the provincial Parliament, as it should be. This process, as it should, benefits the people of Ontario by allowing for thoughtful discussion among the members of each party, to ensure that any proposal that passes through this House is the best version of itself.

It's this process that this government clearly doesn't respect, as witnessed by the time allocation once again before us today.

Speaker, you would be interested to know that there is also a history of current members of this government taking issue with motions for time allocation while they were in opposition. You've been in the chair when I've cited those examples, and you're going to hear some again.

For example, the member of provincial Parliament for St. Catharines, the chief government whip, who has had a

very distinguished 40-year career, said this: "Each of the time allocation motions which close off or choke off debate in this House seems to be more drastic as it comes forward, seems to be more sinister as it relates to the privileges of members of this House and as it relates to healthy, democratic debate for the people of this province."

However, this feeling is not unique to that member. The member for Eglinton—Lawrence once had this to say about time allocation: "That's what this government is doing. It's saying: 'We got elected. We are now going to rule by edict. We're going to rule by closing down debate. We're going to cut off debate....' That's the type of thing people are getting pretty fed up with." And I think they are, Speaker. Actually, Speaker, we'd be interested in hearing the comments of those members regarding the necessity of the time allocation motion before us today.

The legitimate question is, what happened to this government? They appeared to have a strong moral compass in opposition, but have since lost their way on becoming the government of Ontario. However, after 14 years of Liberal government, over a decade of Liberal scandals, waste and mismanagement, residents in Ontario know that there's a lack of a moral accountability for this government. The people of Ontario can no longer trust this Liberal government, because they know that they only care about their own political survival, rather than the greatest interests of the people that we have the privilege to serve.

Speaker, I feel it's necessary to ask this government, why is this bill now suddenly a pressing priority for this government? I think it causes us to take a closer look today at Bill 68. As my colleague from the great riding of Oxford indicated, this bill contains amendments to over a dozen municipally-related acts. This legislation comes at a time as local governments in Ontario are in a period of transition, trying to adapt to changing demographics and the realities of serving their local communities.

While most people in Ontario live under the largest 65 municipal governments, there are 379 municipal governments with less than 50,000 people, of which a further 190 have fewer than 5,000 people, and some of these governments are at a greater distance from urban centres.

When the province proposes to pass one-size-fits-all legislation, you have to remember that the capacity to implement that legislation is far from the same, isn't it? It's far from the same. For those 190 very small municipal governments, their administrative support falls on two to six full-time staff. Currently, they have to administer the Municipal Act and hundreds of other statutes and regulations, and more would be implemented by Bill 68.

More and more unfunded mandates put increasing pressure on property taxes, which are the core municipal financing tool. The pile-on of new unfunded mandates means increased taxation or a reduction in services, or less capital investment in infrastructure to compensate for the new directives—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): There's a lot of chatter from the government side. I would respectfully have you tone down, because I do want to hear from the member from Whitby—Oshawa.

I return to the member from Whitby—Oshawa.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you very much, Speaker. I appreciate your standing up.

What's clear, Speaker, is that the capacity of municipal governments is not endless. Many of us, including the minister, recognize that. For example, a mandatory integrity commissioner will be challenging financially. Additionally, access to a qualified pool of candidates for many municipalities will present a challenge to fulfilling the act's administrative requirements.

But large urban governments have similar concerns. Much of the proposed regime came out of several local circumstances, including Justice Cunningham's report. Yet we know what happens when one situation results in changes for everyone else: There is an inevitable rash of unintended consequences.

Take for example the Members' Integrity Act, 1994, which was passed in this Legislature. Only a member of the assembly can complain to the provincial Integrity Commissioner. Comparatively, for municipal governments, Bill 68 says that any person acting in the public interest can. In theory, that means anyone, including those outside the jurisdiction of the municipality and, in fact, even those outside Canada.

1720

How would any municipal treasurer begin to try to prepare a budget proposal for this? I don't know any municipal treasurer who could, and I served for 13 years on Durham regional council. One might say that the likelihood of an integrity commissioner finding merit in a complaint made by someone living outside a municipality's jurisdiction is small and would not attract costs. However, any complaint means that the integrity commissioner must follow a protocol, including opening a file, a preliminary examination of the merits of the complaint and closing the file if there's a finding of no merit. Any person outside of a municipality could exploit the system at the expense of that municipality's ratepayers. A more efficient change would be to allow municipal ratepayers—the people living and working in the municipality and anyone doing business with the municipal government—to make a complaint to the integrity commissioner.

The proposed new municipal integrity commissioner regime is multi-faceted, but, most important, it's untested. It's untested, Speaker. That's why the integrity commissioner regime's application to local boards should be postponed, at least until further studies can be conducted on the potential effects within municipalities. There's a need to evaluate its workability before it is forced on thousands of community members who volunteer on local boards. We know the value of volunteers in our community. We see it on a daily basis.

In fact, if an integrity commissioner regime applies only to members of council, then it would solve a flaw in the bill as to which integrity commissioner would have

jurisdiction in the case of a joint local board. It would allow the reduction of the 180 days within which an integrity commissioner must complete an inquiry.

Another problematic provision is that integrity commissioners will be able to investigate based on their own initiative. In other words, if no one complains, the integrity commissioner can initiate an investigation on their own authority. This is on top of an integrity commissioner's authority to educate, advise members, and investigate and rule on complaints. This wording "own initiative" is very broad, and unfettered authority will confound the complaint-based integrity systems.

Now, Speaker, based on discussions with municipalities in my region, it should be replaced with a provision that should an integrity commissioner see patterns in conduct, he or she must be granted any request to address council about these matters. I also believe it's wise to include in the act, for the public's clear understanding, that an integrity commissioner has the authority to find a complaint frivolous, vexatious or not made in good faith or that there are insufficient grounds for an inquiry. While an integrity commissioner can make this finding, it should be set out in the bill, as well as other pieces of legislation, such as the Planning Act.

I also want to indicate that the implementation of the integrity commissioner regime, even with the requested changes, is not something that can occur universally within a time frame of months. For many, sharing of an integrity commissioner or finding ways to assign integrity commissioner functions will take a lot of effort, involving consultation—as it should—and negotiation of service agreements, as well as find an integrity commissioner with the necessary qualifications.

Now, based on the closed-meeting investigator experience, the integrity commissioner regime should not take effect before January 2019. However, I welcome the focus in Bill 68 on accountability and transparency relative to other areas of municipal business and operations. In this way, these measures of Bill 68 are largely reflective and consistent with where the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus typically stands. While this Liberal government is prone to errors in judgment when it comes to accountability and transparency, they do occasionally put forth measures that would effectively increase the levels of accountability in municipal government.

Applause.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you, Minister.

For example, the province's last review of the Municipal Act, in 2006, was also deeply influenced by accountability and transparency. Bill 130, introduced in 2006, required municipalities to adopt accountability and transparency regimes, with a mix of mandatory and voluntary elements.

Similarly, in 2014 the province passed Bill 8, the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act. It's a wide-ranging piece of legislation that enacted broad provincial oversight over matters that had previously been under the sole discretion of municipalities.

As with Bill 8 and Bill 130 before it, some of the measures in Bill 68 seem to have been motivated by a greater pursuit of accountability and transparency, which is normally an admirable pursuit. However, the actions and decisions of this Liberal government have continuously shown that their accountability and transparency measures are usually only implemented in response to public demand.

However beneficial they may be, the measures addressing accountability and transparency in Bill 68—and we heard this in the standing committee—will have administrative and financial costs. These costs will be significant. Several municipalities, particularly smaller ones that do not have a large revenue-generating capacity, will face substantial challenges in implementing these measures.

Many of the changes with regard to the fiscal policies contained in Bill 68 are likely to be completely or partially offset by the new unfunded mandates included in this legislation, which, again, are likely to drive up costs for municipalities.

For small municipalities, the problems are especially significant, as the costs for many of the provisions in Bill 68, such as the hiring of an integrity commissioner, are not relative to a municipality's size. That's an important distinction. Small municipalities will have to pay retainers and per-hour investigative rates that are the same as or comparable with those in larger communities.

Speaker, I'd like to turn now to the provisions in Bill 68 that focus on closed-door meetings of municipal councillors. What is clear is that these provisions should be aligned with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. As a result of the obvious disconnect between the Municipal Act and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, there's a risk that matters may be artificially characterized as matters of solicitor-client privilege: for example, when there's a perceived need to discuss contractual and commercially sensitive issues in camera. In my view, this undermines the principles of accountability and transparency.

Alberta's Municipal Government Act, by comparison, specifically aligns the closed-meeting provisions with matters that are protected from the disclosure under their government's privacy legislation. It is proposed that similar provisions be introduced within the Ontario context.

The provision in Bill 68 regarding electronic participation in meetings means that you could have councillors calling in to meetings from the beach. We're very concerned that this reduces the transparency and accountability of municipal councils. What is particularly concerning is that the Liberals government claimed that this is a measure for rural and northern communities, where weather might prevent councillors from attending the meeting. However, they then included the proposed measure in the amendments to the City of Toronto Act as well. Do they think that Scarborough and Etobicoke are rural? Hardly.

What is particularly interesting, Speaker, is that the last time this Liberal government tried to put this change

into the Municipal Act, their own members mistakenly voted it out when they were in committee—imagine that. Imagine that.

1730

The extensive use of technology to facilitate attendance by council members may also erode the principles of accountability and transparency within municipalities. If council members—and this is an expectation of residents who live in these municipalities—are not routinely present and members of the public do not have direct access to those elected officials for the purpose of making deputations and asking questions, the democratic process may be jeopardized and placed in conflict.

In closing, there are some measures in Bill 68, the Modernizing Ontario's Municipal Legislation Act, that potentially could positively affect municipalities within the province. However, there's a counterbalance, isn't there? I've cited some of them. There are others still that will be challenging at best for municipalities to implement or pay for without additional financial assistance from the government.

That's why continued debate on Bill 68 should not be rushed, because this is a bill that fundamentally amends the ways that municipal governments operate. Those who have served on municipal governments understand that. They understand those pressures. They understand the challenges, and they've become far more acute, and they continue to be every day. That's why we urge the government to refrain from using motions for time allocation moving forward. In standing committee, there were many other municipalities who wished to make deputations. Time wasn't available for them to do that.

Ontario municipalities deserve a provincial legislative process and a government that carefully considers and scrutinizes legislation to the benefit of all who are affected by it, including both municipalities and the residents that they serve. Once again, the members of this Legislature—and there are many—who have served on municipal councils understand that important distinction. After all, it's these residents who interact with municipal governments on a regular basis. They are both directly and indirectly affected by any legislation—any legislation—that contains measures that change how municipal governments provide programs and services to hard-working Ontario families.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to be able to rise and speak on behalf of my constituents, even on something like this.

We're talking about a time allocation motion on—I think it's Bill 68, an act to modernize the Municipal Act. My colleague from Timmins—James Bay and I were just discussing that, I think, 99.9999% of people in the province, in the country, don't know what time allocation is and, quite frankly, don't care. We know what it is, and we care. We should care because we are elected representatives of our various ridings, and it's our job to either be in the government or hold the government to account.

But, regardless of where we are in the government, it's our job to try and make legislation better for the people.

I've heard lots of arguments about time allocation. I'm going to try to explain time—I might get in trouble for this, but I'm going to try to explain time allocation in a way that more people will understand. When you're—

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Uh-oh.

Mr. John Vanthof: The member from Nipissing—he's from northern Ontario—knows where I might be going. So—

Mr. Victor Fedeli: We heard from the mayor of Wawa in North Bay last week.

Mr. John Vanthof: Well, I'm not going to go as far as the mayor of Wawa although along the same lines.

Making good legislation is like building a strong relationship, like a marriage. In most cases, when building a strong relationship, you develop a relationship with the person you're going to marry, and it takes you quite a while to plan the wedding and to plan your future and where you're going to live. You know, that all takes a long time and you put a lot of thought into it. You hit some bumps along the road, and you have to negotiate with your partner and negotiate with the partner's family. You hopefully have a good chance, after you've put all that work into it, that you'll come up with a solid relationship, and that solid relationship brings forth good results, whether it be in career or family or contributions to the country or to the province.

That's kind of like legislation. You negotiate. You come up with an idea. You decide, "Hey, maybe we should do this," and you negotiate and you work on it. That's how legislation should work.

In legislative terms, the government introduces legislation, and that's kind of like the first date. And then there is second reading, and then everybody talks about it. Everybody is talking about the legislation. That's what we do here: We debate. Then, after second reading, you go, "Well, you know what? Maybe the legislation is good enough that, yeah, it's worth it. Let's look at further engagement."

But that's when things get serious. And then the partners, who are actually going to have to live with this legislation for a long time, debate. That's the committee structure, right? For this to work, for this to be a solid relationship, you have to give and take. It just can't be one side or the other side, because although you might get to the church, it might not last a long time after, if it's all one-sided. And that's what happens.

But at least then you're going a little bit further. And third reading—that third reading should have taken a long time, to try and work out—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It's like the 50th wedding anniversary.

Mr. John Vanthof: No, to try and work out all of the issues. There will still be issues after. That's why there's always going to have to be a Legislature, to redraft legislation. There are always going to be issues. But when you're starting legislation, you really have to be careful and try to get off on the right foot. That's how

you're supposed to do it: slowly, carefully. Just like creating a marriage, you're making laws—laws that affect millions of people. That is how it should run.

Time allocation is like a shotgun wedding. That's time allocation. Something happens and a decision has to be made, and you know what? Sometimes it works. But a lot of the time, you hit all the rough stuff after.

Mr. Michael Harris: Then it's costly.

Mr. John Vanthof: Then it's costly. It's costly. And we all know about costly legislation. I haven't been partisan so far, but the governing party knows all about costly legislation.

But for the people at home, if they actually ever listen to this, that's kind of the difference to me. It's the difference between carefully planned and totally reactive. As a result, you end up with a lot of troubles, and that's what is happening here. This government, even on ones like this, is being very reactionary.

That's about time allocation.

Now, the bill that we are time-allocating, Bill 68—I believe it's called modernizing the Municipal Act. I'm only going to talk about one issue. Actually, I'm going to talk about one person.

Despite the fact that this committee—the structure wasn't time-allocated yet. The government did everything they could to compress it. Like, it was semi-shotgun. I don't know if that's—it's definitely not unparliamentary, Speaker. I know it's kind of a different word. Anyway, the committee structure was very compressed, and there wasn't much time.

There was one reeve from my riding, and his name is Merrill Bond. He's the reeve of Charlton and Dack. Charlton and Dack isn't a very big municipality. When this legislation came out, he identified that, under the legislation, to be nominated to run for a councillor, you needed 25 signatures. That doesn't sound like a lot, to a lot of municipalities.

1740

Interjection: It is up there.

Mr. John Vanthof: Oh, yes. It doesn't sound like a lot, you know, 25 signatures. Even in some municipalities, if you have a post office, if you stand in front of the post office on mail day—well, that was when we still got mail. But you know, it's not that hard.

But in municipalities like where Merrill ran and a lot of my municipalities and municipalities around the province, it's tough to get 25 signatures. It's also costly because you have to take a car to go to these places. If you're handicapped or if you can't drive for whatever reason, it's almost impossible. Merrill identified that.

Merrill contacted me. Merrill attends the Temiskaming Mayors Action Group, and he brought it there. He brought it to the Temiskaming Municipal Association. He brought it to FONOM's attention. He pushed this like crazy. Honestly, having been here for five years, I questioned how effective Merrill was going to be—not because of Merrill, but because of this government.

But because Merrill is in a position that he can—he's one of the few people in Ontario who can—on short

notice actually show up at a committee, we found out when the committee time was, Merrill applied, and Merrill showed up.

Hon. Jeff Leal: He was here?

Mr. John Vanthof: Merrill was here.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: He had to come to Toronto, though.

Mr. John Vanthof: He had to come to Toronto. Thank you to the member for Timmins—James Bay for mentioning that. Again, these hearings, there are municipalities all across this great province—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: There's more than Toronto?

Mr. John Vanthof: Oh, yes.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh.

Mr. John Vanthof: But where was the hearing held? The hearing was held in Toronto.

In my opinion, Merrill is a municipal superhero. Merrill went from Charlton and Dack and he showed up here and made a presentation at that committee, and he obviously made a very good presentation. He brought a point of view that I don't think anyone else had heard outside of small municipalities. To Merrill's credit and to all the people who supported Merrill—and to the government's credit, they actually listened and they made a change. I will grant the government, that made a difference.

But the problem is, what about all the other people who aren't super-Merrill, who have jobs and kids? If you look at the budget process, you didn't even have a day to prepare. It was an hour between the vote and the committee, so it was impossible. Basically, the people of Ontario are being told every time something is time-allocated that the only good ideas come from people who are within whatever time it is that they give between time allocation for the readings of the bill and for the committee process.

In the case of the budget, they had the committee process. The committee met—I should remember; I was there—from 1 until I believe 6, and then the amendments had to be in by 7. The way amendments work, for the folks at home, the people present to the committee, and the committee should listen, which we try to do, and then the committee should discuss it after and bring it back to their caucuses: “Look”—in the case of Merrill—“this guy from Charlton and Dack brought a really good point, and we should include that.” And that's what happened. But that's because there was actually some time to make that happen.

With the budget, for example, someone at the budget hearings, Steve Mantis, presented at about 6 o'clock. Steve Mantis is part of an injured workers' action group. Steve Mantis describes himself as a “one-armed carpenter,” and Steve is a very good spokesman for his group, a very good spokesman. He had some concerns about WSIB, and he brought them forward at around 6 o'clock, but by 7 o'clock, the amendments had to be in. Realistically, there's no way that his presentation—and if you look at the Hansard, all of us, the government side, the official opposition and the NDP, congratulated him

on his presentation; we all did. As he left, we all knew that because the government had time-allocated the budget, regardless of what he said, regardless of how profound his words were, there was nothing that could be done about it.

You have a man who has gone through an accident, lost his arm, devoted his life to making the lives of other people who have workplace injuries better—because no one can understand what you go through, other than the people who have actually gone through it. He wasn't all critical of WSIB. He had good things to say—and he had some things to say that needed to be changed. He was one of many. It was very valuable information. But there's no way—the way this government was doing it—that his words were ever going to help with that budget. That's the travesty of time allocation, of how this government is starting to use time allocation.

They could be doing legislation in a thoughtful way, to develop strong legislation, like strong marriages. But this government is going more and more and more shotgun every day. Ready, fire, aim.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate? Further debate? Further debate?

Ms. Jaczek has moved government notice of motion number 31, relating to allocation of time on Bill 68, An Act to amend various Acts in relation to municipalities.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion, please say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion, please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

“Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on government notice of motion number 31 be deferred until Monday, May 29, 2017.” It's signed by the chief government whip.

Vote deferred.

SAFER SCHOOL ZONES ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ ACCRUE DES ZONES D'ÉCOLE

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 17, 2017, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 65, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act in respect of speed limits in municipalities and other matters / Projet de loi 65, Loi modifiant le Code de la route relativement aux limites de vitesse dans les municipalités et à d'autres questions.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I appreciate the opportunity to rise and speak on Bill 65, the Safer School Zones Act of 2016.

Speaker, the intention of this bill is to amend the Highway Traffic Act by addressing the ability of municipalities to set speed limits within their borders, and the use of automated speed enforcement systems and red-light cameras.

A little bit of background before we really get into what this is all about: Section 128 of the act is amended so that municipalities can designate areas by bylaw where they can impose speed limits that are lower than 50 kilometres per hour. Highways within the community safety zone that exceed 50 kilometres per hour may be excluded from bylaws that aim to reduce the maximum speed to below 50 kilometres, though that is at the discretion of the municipality.

Part XIV.1—“Photo-Radar System Evidence”—of the act is repealed and replaced by a new part XIV.1, called “Automated Speed Enforcement,” that authorizes the use of automated speed enforcement systems in community safety zones and school zones.

All of this is a little background, but there is an update. At committee, the committee did remove from this act roads with speed limits of less than 80 kilometres per hour from photo radar provisions allowed for community safety zones by the bill. We'll talk about that in a minute.

1750

“Section 12 of the act is amended to allow the registrar to require the return of number plates and to cancel number plates that are not returned within a specified time.” There's a little bit of housekeeping in this as well. We'll talk about that in a moment because, once again, I understood that this was supposed to be a school safety bill and, really, all about school safety. I question why they've put a bunch of other things in it.

“Number plates that are damaged ... such that they can't be photographed by an electronic toll system, automated speed enforcement system or red-light camera system may be cancelled if not returned within 30 days; other number plates may be cancelled if not returned within 60 days”—and on and on it goes.

Despite a series of significant motions presented at committee, the Liberal committee members chose to refuse the measures focused on enhancing student safety. Instead, we saw a number of partisan roadblocks and a lot of spin attacks against our caucus. I'm very upset about that. The ideas presented by our members, and as easily understood as doubling fines in school zones or implementing radar speed signs—the Liberals flat out rejected that, Speaker. Again, this is supposed to be all about school safety and children's safety. But we saw other frivolous things in here and being debated on. Ideas put forward by our caucus that were very children-focused and safety-focused were dismissed out of hand.

Let me tell you a little bit about that. We have our member—I actually have to look it up, Speaker, to see where he is from. I was going to use his name, but you admonished me earlier for that. Let's see if I do it right. The member from Chatham–Kent–Essex, for instance—I'll get the other member's name while I'm at it. I'll remember that one for a bit later, then—Kitchener–Conestoga.

The member from Chatham–Kent–Essex brought forward a bill. The member from Kitchener–Conestoga brought forward an amendment based on that bill, and it was quashed. It's a key amendment, Speaker. It's one to take aim at school bus blow-bys. I think the fact that this

bill is presented under the guise of children's safety and school safety and school safety zones—and when a thoughtful amendment was brought forward by the member from Kitchener–Conestoga to address these school bus blow-bys—that was particularly disappointing.

I live in the riding of Nipissing. No matter which of the five highways you leave North Bay by, you will see these posters that are very poignant. There was a young man named Adam who was killed when someone went blowing by a school bus with the arm extended. A little child, Adam, the cutest little guy you can imagine—his photo is now on these billboards all surrounding the city. It's called Let's Remember Adam. It's a really thoughtful and important billboard campaign, because all up and down these little highways—and some of those highways, Speaker, are 90-kilometre-an-hour highways; Highway 17, for instance, on the Trans-Canada. It's a two-lane highway all throughout that area, but nonetheless, it's still where the school buses have to stop to pick up the kids for school in the morning and bring them home at night.

The Let's Remember Adam campaign is a particularly thoughtful one because he was killed by somebody blowing by a school bus.

Instead of supporting the idea of school bus camera evidence in court—so you see what we are talking about, Speaker. Installing these cameras on the school buses and then changing the laws in Ontario could have all been done in this bill if it really had anything remotely to do with children's safety. They could have changed the law to allow for greater school bus safety.

Again, our MPP from Kitchener–Conestoga—this was widely covered in the media. Sadly, he talks about this missed opportunity to embrace video technology as evidence in the courts, to be used to find and prosecute drivers who continue to blow by stopped school buses. Twice, the member from Kitchener–Conestoga attempted to get the Liberals to agree to these amendments that would literally lay the legislative foundation to allow the school bus stop-arm video to be admissible in court as stand-alone evidence—very similar to the red-light camera evidence. That got turned down. That never made it. That would have been a really great thing to do in Ontario, and for heaven's sake, Michael Harris might have just got some credit. Well, we can't allow that to happen. No way are we going to have school bus stop-arm cameras when it comes from a PC's idea. God forbid, you can't accept that good idea.

It's very frustrating because we're supposed to be talking about school safety and adopting safety measures, and instead, it's partisan nonsense that went on here. We talked about it a couple of hours ago when I stood up; I talked about the partisan nature. Now we're at it again. I've got to be honest, Speaker, this is getting to be particularly frustrating, to know that there are good ideas from all three parties. Our leader, Patrick Brown, says it all the time: "It doesn't matter where the idea came from. If it's a good idea, we're going to adopt it." We vote in favour of many Liberal ideas, but we just don't see the opposite coming back. This is an idea of putting cameras on the stop arm of a school bus, for heaven's sake, and that gets thrown out. That's really, really unfortunate.

I also want to thank the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex because he did bring this as a private member's bill. We'll see if this can actually get implemented in Ontario one day and start to save lives.

I know the member from Kitchener–Conestoga talks about the statistics. There was a recent bus camera pilot project in Waterloo. They found that between 500 and 700 drivers illegally drove past a stopped school bus each week. That is unbelievable. They have these near misses that are published, video recordings of these near misses. Luckily for these kids, they were near misses. For Adam in Nipissing, it wasn't a near miss; he was killed. Thankfully, the family chose to honour his memory by allowing his face—and again, Speaker, he's the cutest little guy—to be used on all these billboards. No matter where you go, you cannot drive on a highway in Nipissing where you don't see a Let's Remember Adam billboard.

Instead of accepting this, we've got—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I recognize the member from Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Madam Speaker, we have some honoured visitors in the House over here with Mr. Naqvi. We should welcome them to this House. Hello, little ones. What are their names?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: This is Elliana and Rafi.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Elliana and—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): That is not a point of order.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Seeing as it's 6 o'clock, I will be recessing the House until 6:45.

The House recessed from 1800 to 1845.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Tonia Grannum, Valerie Quioc Lim, William Short

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Hon. / L'hon. Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Ballard, Hon. / L'hon. Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	Minister of Housing / Ministre du Logement Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brown, Patrick (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of International Trade / Ministre du Commerce International
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism / Ministre délégué à l'Action contre le racisme
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Seniors Affairs / Ministre des Affaires des personnes âgées
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Des Rosiers, Nathalie (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Growth / Ministre du Développement économique et de la Croissance
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Hon. / L'hon. Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales Minister Responsible for Small Business / Ministre responsable des Petites Entreprises
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs Minister Responsible for Accessibility / Ministre responsable de l'Accessibilité
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development / Ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Formation professionnelle Minister Responsible for Digital Government / Ministre responsable de l'Action pour un gouvernement numérique
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Municipal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires municipales
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Hon. / L'hon. Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McMahon, Hon. / L'hon. Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research, Innovation and Science / Ministre de la Recherche, de l'Innovation et des Sciences
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Indira (LIB)	Halton	Minister of the Status of Women / Ministre de la condition féminine Minister Responsible for Early Years and Child Care / Ministre responsable de la Petite enfance et de la Garde d'enfants
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Attorney General / Procureur général Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint de parti reconnu
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Hon. / L'hon. Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation / Ministre des Relations avec les Autochtones et de la Réconciliation
Vacant	Sault Ste. Marie	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉ PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Présidente: Cheri DiNovo
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Michael Mantha
Bob Delaney, Cheri DiNovo
Joe Dickson, Michael Harris
Sophie Kiwala, Michael Mantha
Peter Z. Milczyn, Arthur Potts
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Peter Z. Milczyn
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Ann Hoggarth
Yvan Baker, Toby Barrett
Han Dong, Victor Fedeli
Ann Hoggarth, Harinder Malhi
Cristina Martins, Peter Z. Milczyn
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Granville Anderson
Granville Anderson, Yvan Baker
Mike Colle, Grant Crack
Nathalie Des Rosiers, Lisa Gretzky
Ann Hoggarth, Julia Munro
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Présidente: Cristina Martins
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Daiene Vernile
Granville Anderson, James J. Bradley
Wayne Gates, Amrit Mangat
Cristina Martins, Sam Oosterhoff
Randy Pettapiece, Shafiq Qaadri
Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Mike Colle
Nathalie Des Rosiers, Jim McDonell
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qaadri
Monique Taylor, Daiene Vernile
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Monte McNaughton
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laurie Scott
Robert Bailey, James J. Bradley
Joe Dickson, Sophie Kiwala
Harinder Malhi, Michael Mantha
Monte McNaughton, Laurie Scott
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Bob Delaney, Vic Dhillon
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Randy Hillier, Monte Kwinter
Lisa MacLeod
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Ted McMeekin
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lou Rinaldi
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Grant Crack
Jennifer K. French, Jack MacLaren
Ted McMeekin, Lou Rinaldi
Mario Sergio, Soo Wong
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh
Lorne Coe, Vic Dhillon
John Fraser, Amrit Mangat
Gila Martow, Ted McMeekin
Lou Rinaldi, Jagmeet Singh
Peter Tabuns
Clerk / Greffier: Vacant